CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #560,
At the Picnic, on the Grounds adjacent
to Val Kill Cottage, Hyde Park, New York,
July 4, 1939, 2.25 P. M.

Q (Mr. Trohan) Belair (Mr. Felix Belair of the New York Times) has asked me to announce that he is going to take notes at this Conference.

THE PRESIDENT: Where is Mr. Bickel? (Referring to Mr. Carl Bickel of the United Press) Mr. Bickel is here. Mr. Storm wants Mr. Bickel.

MR. HASSETT: I think he is coming.

THE PRESIDENT: He is here. Carl, did you ever see Fred (Mr. Storm) in action?

Q (Mr. Bickel) Not very much. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: You want to watch him; he is good. He takes no notes at all. He is wonderful. It generally stays in the head, so it is all right.

Q We have all our questions printed on the tablecloth here. (Indicating blue tablecloth, which had, printed on it in white letters, the initials of the various agencies of the Government as well as slogans, current and past, used during the Administration.)

THE PRESIDENT: (Reading from tablecloth) "Cotton is King," "Liberty League," "Soak the Rich," "Popular Sovereign."

Q That is Calloway (Cason Calloway) -- "Every Man a King."

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think there is any news at all. I do not know of any and neither does the Press.

Q What can you tell us about the foreign situation, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing that you have not printed and a great deal that you have printed.

Q Can you comment, Mr. President, what in your opinion will be the result of the House action on the neutrality bill, which they voted on on Friday?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Any comment on this monetary --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No.

Q Are you going to see the leaders tomorrow morning, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know; I have not the faintest idea. I wish I could be helpful.

Q Any truth in that story in the papers this morning on how you felt on how the House voted?

THE PRESIDENT: I did not see it. What kind of a story? The only one I saw was the crazy story in the Times (New York Times).

Q (Mr. Belair) Under the Washington date line?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q (Mr. Belair) Thank you, Mr. President. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: You are all right; you are absolved. I might almost say it is a typical Washington date line story.

Q (Mr. Belair) Mr. President, those were my very words this morning.

Q At your last Press Conference in Washington, you told us that the Treasury Department was studying a method by which they could meet the situation created through the defeat of the monetary bill. Is there anything that you can tell us about that?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not communicated with them and I am sorry to spoil a good story but I have not even talked to the Secretary

of the Treasury since last Friday afternoon and he holds up his hand over there and tells us that I am telling the truth. It leaves you out on the limb. You see, Carl (Bickel), how stories are made?

Q I talked to him (indicating the Secretary of the Treasury) and he said that he is whistling.

THE PRESIDENT: Whistling to keep up his courage.

Q Yes, and he is wearing dark glasses.

Q Are you going to press for new monetary legislation at this session?

THE PRESIDENT: New monetary legislation? What is the matter with the present monetary legislation that is in the works?

Q There are some in the works?

THE PRESIDENT: Aren't you a little previous?

Q He has been listening to the wrong lawyer.

Q Where, in your opinion, is the $2,000,000,000. of what was the stabilization fund?

THE PRESIDENT: It is in suspense.

Q Not in the general fund of the Treasury?

THE PRESIDENT: Did you ever see one of those seances where the body rises from the table and remains in mid-air?

Q Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: That is it.

Q (Mr. Trohan) Mohammed's Coffin.

Q We have a classic scholar there.

Q We wrote yesterday, without any attribution in any manner, that you felt that the House action on the neutrality bill would have an unfavorable effect on the European crisis and would, perhaps, even

shorten the chances of war, that it would make it more difficult for you to keep America out of war and to conserve peace.

THE PRESIDENT: I think you were absolutely right in your stories, which were based largely on press dispatches from the other side, from the four principal capitals. Those dispatches, I think, were substantially accurate because they were reflected in the official dispatches that the State Department got.

If you wanted to supplement that at all, I think you might emphasize a little bit more the fact that the policy of the Administration is to try to prevent any war in any part of the world. That is the first policy and anything that can be done to stop a war from starting is a good thing because it does not raise certain questions which would be raised if a war started. That is in words of one syllable.

Q (Mr. Harkness) Mr. President, on that basis, is it a safe assumption, or would you say that you want the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to go ahead with its consideration of neutrality legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, in the interest of preventing war.

Q (Mr. Harkness) Would you like them to use, sir, the original Bloom Bill?

THE PRESIDENT: Now you are going into details; let us stick to the objective rather than the details.

Q May I put this question this way? May I say that you are still for the objectives of Secretary Hull's recommendations --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) That is right, yes.

Q -- which were embodied in the Bloom Bill?

I mean Mr. Hull's letter to Senator Pittman and Representative

Bloom?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that is right.

But, again, consider the objectives, because sometimes you can get objectives by changing the wording of the thing, as you all know.

Q Also by a few amendments.

Q Do you think, sir, there should be action at this session of the Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, again in the interest of preventing war.

Q How about the western trip?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you know the date now.

Q (Mr. Trohan) I do not know the month, though.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that is different. It is four days after Congress goes home.

Q That would be the nineteenth, would it not? (Laughter)

Q Going to get down as far as Hollywood?

THE PRESIDENT: No, Fred (Storm), not again.

Q He has already gone to work.

THE PRESIDENT: What are you doing, drawing a double salary? (Laughter)

Q (Mr. Storm) I wish I were.

THE PRESIDENT: I think you ought to ask your boss if he wants to ask questions, some you have forgotten.

Q (Mr. Storm) Carl?

Q (Mr. Bickel) I can't think of a thing. I would not want to embarrass you, Fred, by asking any.

Q Mr. President, do you have any comment to make on the statements of several and certain Senators that they will discuss the neutrality

bill until September, if necessary, to retain the embargo?

THE PRESIDENT: That is entirely up to them. They have full discretion to do it if they want to, under the Senate rules.

Q Mr. President, is it true that you have asked the Procurement Division of the Treasury to give a plaque to the Rhinebeck Post Office, setting forth the fact that the Crown Prince of Denmark had assisted in the cornerstone laying?

THE PRESIDENT: The plaque is all designed and in process of being made.

I think it would be nice to have something there to commemorate the laying of the cornerstone.

Q (Mr. Trohan) How about the final remark?

THE PRESIDENT: That will be there and attributed to you.

Q (Mr. Trohan) To me, the Master of Ceremonies?

Q When do you expect that will be ready to go up to Rhinebeck?

THE PRESIDENT: There won't be any ceremony.

Q How long will it be?

THE PRESIDENT: In about a month. That is just a guess on my part.

I do not know how long it takes to make them.

Q You were serious about naming that school after Mr. Haviland?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Largely because of his historical life?

THE PRESIDENT: And also because all his life he has been a perfectly splendid citizen of this town, interested in all the work of education in the town and a good neighbor to all the town.

I think it would be a nice thing to do, especially because it stands on land that was in his family for about four generations. It would be a nice thing. You know the old man? He is

a grand old fellow.

Q Yes. I don't think it is quite four generations.

THE PRESIDENT: It may have been his grandfather that came there.

Q I talked to him the other day.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Have you received any new messages from abroad?

THE PRESIDENT: No, just the routine.

Q You have been in very constant touch, have you not, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I am sorry, George (Durno). (The President was referring to the fact that the newspaper stories out of Hyde Park had indicated that he, the President, was so in touch.)

Q I should not have asked that question.

Q Trying to make the story you have written stand up is bad. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: It is all right. No, I have not talked to Washington all day Sunday or all day yesterday. I did not see any dispatches until about ten of them this morning and there wasn't anything of interest in them.

Q If you saw ten dispatches this morning, that would cover me up.

Q If Russ Young were here he would say, "We know what a President ought to do." (Laughter)

Q Do you plan to see Mr. Hull tomorrow?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose so, but I do not think that is a news item because I always do see him when I get back, rain or shine.

Q How about coming back to Dutchess? Can you count on much of it?

THE PRESIDENT: We cannot count on anything at all. Off and on until this famous trip to the Pacific Coast.

Q Are you going to take any interest in the local political situation?

THE PRESIDENT: Not any more than I have since 1906. (Laughter)

Q Nor less, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Nor less.

MR. TROHAN: I think it is a good time for a "Thank you."

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #561,
Executive Offices of the White House,
July 11, 1939, 4.10 P.M.

THE PRESIDENT: I have a suggestion to make. Where is Russell (referring to Mr. Young)?

Q He is sick today.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you remember why Fred (Mr. Storm) occupied that chair, don't you?

Q (Mr. Earl Godwin) Opaque and large?

THE PRESIDENT: That was it. You could not see through him. Now, don't you think you had better sit in that chair?

Q (Mr. Godwin) Me?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Does it mean that I would have to go to Hollywood later on?

THE PRESIDENT: No, that would be cruel and unusual punishment. But you go ahead and sit down.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Shall I tell them when the book is full? Remember that, when I say, "Thank you, Mr. President," that is enough!

Jimmy (Mr. James Roosevelt) had an awfully good party (for Fred Storm).

THE PRESIDENT: I hear you were grand, that you were perfect. I was amazed because Jimmy got home a quarter to eleven. I said, "What is the matter? Was the party a flop?"

Q It went on until four or five o'clock.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I heard that afterwards.

Q It was an awfully good party.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: All of you who are behind will be glad to know that Fred Storm's chair by the desk has been filled by the promotion of Mr. Earl Godwin to the chair on the ground that he is large and not transparent, but he takes this position with a guarantee from me that he won't have to go to Hollywood. (Laughter) It is all right.

And he, after this, in place of Fred (Storm), will make the famous announcement whenever he chooses in the conference. He will say, "Mr. President, that is enough." (Laughter)

I think that is all that Earl and I have.

Q Mr. President, can you give us the background of the McNutt appointment? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I would say in that case that some of you people may be writing yourselves out on limbs. In other words, although it may sound strange, coming from Washington in the way of news dispatches, sometimes in making appointments there are other considerations than politics. In other words, in this particular position we have five or six agencies that are concerned with various forms of welfare. Each of the heads of those agencies will continue to conduct his particular agency in exactly the same manner as he does at the present time. For instance, Dr. Parran will continue to conduct Public Health. It is a question largely of medical science, research, et cetera. C. C. C. will continue to be conducted as it is at the present time.

Under the reorganization plan which went through, there

were created three agencies to coordinate. It will be difficult for some people to understand it -- I appreciate that -- but it is a fact that that particular position of Federal Security Administrator is not concerned with the politics of any of those five or six agencies under his control. Neither will that individual be concerned with individual politics any more than any member of the Cabinet or any other member of this Administration or the Supreme Court or the Congress -- no, I will leave out "or the Congress" because they are all the time.

So, do not write yourselves out on the limb because it is a pity to be shallow in reporting, even out of Washington. In other words, there are more serious implications than politics.

With that lecture, I think I have said everything that is necessary.

Q You think there are no politics whatever to be talked about?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think you will find, for instance, that Mr. McNutt will be running as a candidate for the Presidency any more than any other ten, twelve or fifteen people that you or I could name very easily.

Q Is it a fact that he made it a condition of acceptance that his friends should not be precluded from pushing him for the Presidency?

THE PRESIDENT: No, that was not mentioned at all.

Q He said you cannot control your friends.

THE PRESIDENT: How many people are there who have been spoken of for nomination who are actively in Government service? I should say about ten or twelve or fifteen, any number you can choose. Some

are members of the Cabinet. Now, they all have friends; you cannot help that. Try to get the facts clear. I know some people who won't, but it is all right.

Q It is a little vague to some of us just exactly what the duties of this Administrator will be. The individual agencies will be run as they are and he will not be concerned with policies. What will be his duties?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, one of the first things is to prevent overlapping of duties. Well, just for example, we had a great question of where the [Employment ?] Unemployment Service shall go. Some people said it should go into Labor and other people said it should go into the new Security Administration.

There is quite a lot of work that can be done to coordinate the Administration in different cities and counties and states and between Unemployment Insurance, Social Security and the Employment Service. Now, there are three that tie in together. We will be able to save in personnel; we will be able to prevent misunderstandings within states; we will be able to inspect more easily the states' contribution and help the states so that they, perhaps, can coordinate their own activities with respect to unemployment insurance, as to which they are contributors, and unemployment pension and old age pension.

Take another thing: We may have a tremendous drive on that takes the attention of the public and directs it all into one line. Let us say that it is the great health program of the Nation. Everybody says, "Let's go; let's obligate the Government for a billion dollars this year." All right, then you have

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the school question, education. Are you going to leave them out? Are we going to go all lopsided? Well, that will be one of the duties of the Administrator to see that all of these welfare agencies are adequately provided for without giving too much to one and too little to the other, there being only so much money to go around.

Q Mr. President, will you name Josephus Daniels as Secretary of the Navy?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't taken up that question and won't for a long time.

Q You took politics out when Pete Brandt asked that question and you mentioned a rather intricate program of administration. I gather you picked Mr. McNutt because he has administrative ability or something of that sort. Is there something you care to say about that?

THE PRESIDENT: That is absolutely true. You know, it is an interesting thing, which I think you all realize although you probably won't all write it. If you take a successful businessman, who has an individual business, and you bring him down into the Federal Government, the chances are that you have a greater percentage of failures than where you take somebody who has had successful experience in public life before he comes down to the Federal Government. That is unbelievably true, and some of you older people, like Fred Essary, will recognize that. You know the tragedies we have had in Washington in bringing down people who have been successful in conducting some one individual business. They know their own business thoroughly. They do not

know the relationship of their business to other forms of business. Half the time they do not know the United States. They know their own geographical locality. That is why all this talk about bringing businessmen down to Washington is too far-fetched. We brought some down successfully but, with respect to others, we made a complete flop of it.

Paul McNutt has had a good deal of practical experience, running a law school, Governor of Indiana, and High Commissioner in the Philippines. He has made good at all of those administrative jobs, therefore there is reasonable probability that he will make good on this administrative job.

Q Is Mr. McNutt an exponent of those liberal principles that underlie the Social Security program?

THE PRESIDENT: I should think so. I don't believe he would undertake the job if he was opposed to the present Social Security laws, do you?

Q What is your attitude toward the Senate vote on neutrality?

THE PRESIDENT: I see the Secretary of State made a statement. It was very good and he mentions the six points. I think it might be worth while adding just one thing to it, that at the present time there is not a law covering these points except the sixth.

There isn't any law to prohibit American ships, irrespective of what they may be carrying, from entering combat areas. There isn't any law to restrict travel by American citizens in combat areas. There isn't any law to provide that the export of goods destined for belligerents shall be preceded by transfer of title to the foreign purchaser. There isn't any law to continue the

existing legislation respecting loans and credits to nations at war. There isn't any law to regulate the solicitation and collection in this country of funds for belligerents.

So there I am and there is the Secretary of State. And of course the other thing is, and it has been made clear, and that is if the Congress should go home and adjourn, leaving these open for possible action sometime next spring -- not January, because you know what would happen; it would be next spring sometime -- two kinds of things may happen in the meantime and, if something should happen internationally in the meantime, it would be a pretty difficult thing for Congress to reassemble after the event and pass legislation in the face of an existing war. There is a probability that everybody would be charged with unneutrality at that time.

Q Now what is the next move in the situation so far as the Administration is concerned?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think there is any news on that this afternoon.

Q Senator Pittman says that the vote of the Committee anticipates a special session of Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Anticipates it? I did not know that.

Q It was the motion by Clark to postpone it. He said that anticipated a special session of Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh!

Q In case of war.

THE PRESIDENT: In case of war. In other words, just exactly what I say -- after the event.

Q Senator Pittman says he is going to press for a vote Friday by the Foreign Relations Committee on his nine-power treaty embargo bill; that is, the embargoing of nations violating the nine-power treaty.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know enough about it.

Q That would force an immediate declaration of embargo on munitions and materials of war, including oil, without admitting that a state of war exists.

THE PRESIDENT: No, that is a new one on me.

Q Will you ask the Leaders to keep Congress in session until they do something about the Neutrality Act?

THE PRESIDENT: I have answered that; I do not think I have any information on that today.

Q Will you consider the possibility of calling a special session, if there is no war, in anticipation of a war?

THE PRESIDENT: Same answer. My God, that has four "ifs" in it.

Q When do you plan to send up your special Message on District of Columbia fiscal affairs?

THE PRESIDENT: I have been waiting and trying to read the paper to see whether we can get action without it. How much more time shall we give them?

Q I don't know.

Q Have you any observations about the T. V. A. compromise?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not heard the details but apparently it does make possible a complete financing of Mr. Wilkie and so I suppose it is all right.

Q Shouldn't it restore investment confidence?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think that was needed, Ulric (Mr. Bell).

It was very well shown -- well, for instance, the issue of bonds the other day, a very large issue to refinance, to refund the financial structure of that concern out in Oregon which is right next to Bonneville and Grand Coulee. It went over big. In other words, the investing public does not believe all it reads.

Q Mr. President, do you have any comment on these W. P. A. strikes?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think so. The situation, as I got it today, is that about three per cent of all the W. P. A. workers are out in the United States and most of that three per cent are confined to two or three communities.

Q What are your personal views on the prevailing wage situation?

I know that at one time the Administration opposed it and then Harry Hopkins recommended it and now it goes out. I was wondering, does the Administration oppose --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Just stick to the existing law; carry out the existing law.

Q An attempt is being made to change that law. Will the Administration oppose that?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know anything about it except what I read in the papers.

Q The papers have stated that the present law, against which these strikers are protesting, was your authorship or, at least, had your O. K., between you and Colonel Harrington. Is that a correct statement?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not remember; I could not tell you. In other

words, Colonel Harrington may have spoken to me about it and, frankly, I do not know whether he did or not but, anyway, the thing went in and was passed with practically no opposition and I did not list it when I signed the bill as one of the main objections to the bill. I did list some other things.

Q Whom will you appoint to succeed Mr. McNutt as High Commissioner?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know; I have not taken up any appointment.

Q Is it true that American sailors will participate in the Bastille Day celebration in France?

THE PRESIDENT: No. The usual thing will happen on the fourteenth of July and that is that in most ports where American ships are present, they will parade, if they are requested to by the municipality, in the streets of the port. In France there are some men going ashore at Havre, but that is all; that is where the ships are lying.

Q Would you care to comment on the action of the County Chairmen of New York who met at Rochester and passed a resolution attacking the political activities of Thomas Corcoran?

THE PRESIDENT: I never heard of it.

Q They met last week and did that.

THE PRESIDENT: His political activities?

Q They thought he was guilty of some and they did not like it.

THE PRESIDENT: They did not mention them?

Q They mentioned Moskowitz, which was the National Emergency. They said he was setting up a political organization.

THE PRESIDENT: You had better get the facts.

Q Is the increase of Export-Import Bank credit a satisfactory sub-

stitute for your original proposal?

THE PRESIDENT: I think so.

Q The Justice Department has taken a criminal investigation --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I cannot hear.

Q I am asking if you have any comment on W. P. A. strikes as applied to --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) The Department of Justice, I think, started an investigation this afternoon or this morning.

Q Did you have any part in that?

THE PRESIDENT: No, it was reported to me from the Department.

Q Do I understand that these dozen aspiring young men of the Administration are privileged to go ahead with their Presidential campaigns?

THE PRESIDENT: That is just the opposite to what I said. I said that these dozen charming young men are not going ahead. What their friends do out in the sticks I do not know and I do not believe that it is within their control.

Q Do you favor the continuation of the Senate investigation of violations of civil liberties?

THE PRESIDENT: I have all along.

MR. BELAIR: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #562,
Executive Offices of the White House,
July 14, 1939, 10.44 A.M.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I am sending up this morning to Representative Collins and Senator Overton quite a brief letter referring to the District of Columbia appropriation question. I think you will have to get it up there because I cannot properly give it out here before they get it. It is the same letter to both of them.

Q Is that the communication that Mr. Early indicated might go up?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q You do not care to discuss it, then?

THE PRESIDENT: Only I can tell you this, that it suggests to Congress that if the Appropriation Bill does not pass they should pass some form of Joint Resolution which would appropriate the money for tomorrow's payday and enable the 10,000 employees of the District to keep on their jobs and get paid for their work.

Q Representatives Kennedy and Randolph are here from the Hill. Did you happen to know that?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q They are outside and possibly want to come in. I thought possibly you may have known that.

THE PRESIDENT: On the neutrality thing, there isn't any news yet. The Secretary is coming in around noon and there may be some news this afternoon.

Q What are your week-end plans?

THE PRESIDENT: Russell (Young), I do not know definitely yet. I

probably will stay here. I may go down the river on Sunday just for the day.

Q What is your reaction to the action in the Senate on having the Government pay two to one on social security?

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot tell you anything about it because I have got some people coming in today to tell me about it.

Q Is there anything you can tell us about the W.P.A. situation now? That is, the labor difficulties?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not heard anything since the day before yesterday except what I have read.

Q Mr. President, have you received the report from the Attorney General on his first six months in office? I believe he submitted a report, did he not?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I have had a letter from him speaking of various things that have been done, including the setting up, I think, of those two new divisions, one is on civil liberties and there is no reason, as far as I am concerned, why that should not be made public. If Justice wants to give it out, it is all right.

Q Do you agree with him that there should be no strike against the Government?

THE PRESIDENT: You cannot strike against the Government.

Q They had a Barge Line strike in St. Louis. Suppose you had a T.V.A. strike, is that a strike against the Government?

THE PRESIDENT: (The President evidently said, "Yes," in answer to the first part of the previous question, without hearing the latter part of the question which was rather indistinct.)

Q What was that question? W.P.A. strike?

Q I said, "Suppose you had a T.V.A. strike, is that a strike against the Government?"

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. I could not answer that question offhand. It is a subsidiary of the Government.

Q We had one on the Mississippi Barge Line.

THE PRESIDENT: That is the same sort of thing.

Q But on the fundamental question of W.P.A., you feel that there should be no strike?

THE PRESIDENT: That is a straight Government operation, yes.

Q There has been a lot of discussion about this 130-hour month. Can you tell us something of what you regard as the difficulties of the maintenance of the prevailing wage as contrasted against the desirability of this 130-hour blanket arrangement?

THE PRESIDENT: It would take too long. I think it is a thing for an hour's discussion. There are so many angles. It is awfully hard to do it off the bat. There are a great many pros and cons on each angle -- geography, trade, et cetera and so on.

Q It is one of the things that has not been emphasized that there has been a difference, not only as to the hours but as to the subsistence wage, that is, the total amount.

THE PRESIDENT: That is right and of course that depends --

Q (interposing) A lot of people think this is an attempt to make a blanket 130 hours a month for the same total amount of wages and that is not the case.

THE PRESIDENT: No and, as I say, there are so many angles and so many instances you could use that it is very hard to talk intelligently about any one of them without giving them undue

emphasis. For instance, just to take an example, how far should the Government go with respect to base relief? Subsistence is supposed to be a little bit better than home relief. We know the problem of the highly skilled artisan. Should that apply, for example, to any one of us here, a member of the Press, let us say? Take the average earnings of everybody in this room: Should we take that as the criterion? A clergyman loses his job; what does he get? A bank cashier who has been getting four or five thousand dollars a year loses his job and cannot find employment; what should he get?

It is not just the question of a few trades but applies to almost every occupation in life, professions as well as trades.

It is too difficult to go into much more deeply than that.

Q When will you see President Green (of the A. F. of L.)?

THE PRESIDENT: I think -- 11.45 this morning.

Q Will there be a statement later, after that?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, I think it was Tracy (Daniel Tracy) was the name of the gentleman who was here yesterday. We asked him for a statement and he said that if any were issued, one would come from here. Does that apply to this meeting here today?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Will you discuss the possibility of a recess of Congress until October?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I have not heard about it.

Q Can you tell us about this other group of Congressmen who are coming in today?

THE PRESIDENT: They are coming in to discuss getting some P. W. A. money.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #563,
Executive Offices of the White House,
July 18, 1939, 4.07 P.M.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know what news there is.

Q I would like to ask you a local question before the internationalists get on you. I read that the District Subcommittee has shelved or buried your District reorganization. You put Commissioner Allen back into the service for that reason. Have you had a chance to think about what would happen with respect to George Allen? Would you keep him right on?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Of course, on the general proposition of getting a better government for the District of Columbia, ever since 1913, the first year I came down here in an official capacity, hope has sprung eternal in my breast.

Q And it is still springing?

THE PRESIDENT: Still springing.

Q Specifically, it might be a foolish question, but you remember there was a short term loan of George Allen to the District Government and this seems to put something in the way of it.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, no. I imagine, during the rest of this fall, the three Commissioners and I will talk things over and maybe change the proposed bill a bit and try to get something for the Congress to consider next January.

MR. EARLY: George (Commissioner Allen) expects to stay on.

THE PRESIDENT: Commissioner Allen expects to stay on, yes.

Q Have you any idea of how you would change the bill?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Do you agree with Secretary Woodring that, for reasons of defense, the Brooklyn-Battery Bridge should not be built up in New York?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know; I have not studied it. It is up to the War Department.

Q Is there anything you can tell us about a successor to Mr. McNutt in the Philippines?

THE PRESIDENT: No; nothing yet.

Q Mr. President, do you expect to go to Pittsburgh to address the Young Democrats?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't any idea; I have absolutely no plans whatsoever.

Q Mr. President, may I ask if Mr. McNutt will be permitted to fulfill engagements he had made? He had already accepted to speak before the Young Democrats at Pittsburgh.

THE PRESIDENT: You will have to ask him; I do not know.

Q He is out of town.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know who is going to speak there.

Q Mr. President, a story was syndicated this morning under the name of Walter Winchell, which stated that an informant had told him that you had positively announced that you were going to run for a third term and that you desired Mr. McNutt to be your running mate. Did you ever make such statement to any source of information?

THE PRESIDENT: Would it be fair to label that as a newspaper story?

Q No.

THE PRESIDENT: I doubt it.

Q (chorus, while the President was saying "I doubt it") No.

THE PRESIDENT: I agree with you.

Q (Mr. Godwin) I will give you a name for that. It is a "nightclub story."

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I will tell you what it is like, talking off the record. It is just like a story that appeared in Drew Pearson's and Bob Allen's column about my talk with Cardinal Mundelein, flying into a rage and all sorts of things. Of course that is another. I do not know whether I would call that a newspaper story.

Q Will you give it a name, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: No. There was another one by Arthur Krock, another columnist, this morning. This is all off the record. It is the same idea.

Q A misunderstanding might arise from that. You have been referring to anything as a newspaper story as being untrue --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I know, but aren't there degrees? One is third and the other is thirty-second.

Q Another article in the afternoon papers by -- since we are mentioning names -- by Mr. Bill Hutchinson of the International News, says that Capitol Hill reports that Mr. McNutt's role is to go out and campaign for a third term.

THE PRESIDENT: That we will have to label as a newspaper story. I do not know whether it is a third term for Mr. McNutt or Mr. --

Q (interposing) Roosevelt?

THE PRESIDENT: -- or Mr. Hutchinson.

Q Have you been following the developments in Louisiana?

THE PRESIDENT: No; I have not, except what I have read in the newspapers.

Q Have you any comment on the one-day stoppage of W. P. A. on Thursday by the Workers' Alliance?

THE PRESIDENT: What is that? I have not heard of it.

Q They sent out orders for one day's stoppage for demonstrations and parades and mass meetings.

THE PRESIDENT: I have not heard of it.

Q Any comment at all?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Senator Lodge is trying to persuade the Senate to pass a bill to cut all executive expenditures ten per cent. Have you a reaction to that?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not heard of the bill. You will have to define it a little bit more. What do you call executive expenditures?

Q All departmental appropriations. I think he excludes social security payments, relief and fixed charges.

THE PRESIDENT: And that is all?

Q As far as I know.

THE PRESIDENT: Will he cut the debt service ten per cent?

Q I think he includes that in fixed charges.

THE PRESIDENT: Of course you can cut in some places without hurting Government functions but you cannot cut others. People who put in bills of that kind, of course, ought to have the courage to be specific.

Q In connection with the W. P. A. strike violations in Minneapolis,

would you care to indicate how far it is proper for the Federal Government to go in maintaining law and order on Federal projects?

THE PRESIDENT: Read the Constitution.

Q Will you comment on the neutrality situation, since you are going into this conference tonight?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Perhaps you would like to comment on the business situation in view of the stock market shooting up?

THE PRESIDENT: I would be afraid to. (Laughter)

Q Can you tell us --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I will say this, that I am neither short nor long, so it is all right.

Q Have you any idea of addressing the country by air again soon?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not heard of it.

Q Do you agree with the A. F. of L. interpretation of the Relief Act that you have power under the emergency clause?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not had that report. I asked them to let me have a report on it. That is Section 15-B, or something like that. I have not had any judicial interpretation of it but my own -- what shall I call it? -- layman's reading of it is that it does not authorize the Administrator of W. P. A. to change what is a perfectly definite provision of the law itself, except in a matter of unusual and unthought of, you might call it, emergency. Now, that is just a horseback, layman's opinion. But, to make an executive exception to what is a perfectly clear provision in the law itself, I do not think that Section 15-B was intended to cover it.

Q Sir, is that the wages?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q May I revert to the Lodge question with respect to a cut of ten per cent? You asked, I do not recall whether it was the last fiscal year or not, for certain economies to be administered by the heads of Government. Was that for the year that had just closed?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that is for the year that has just passed and we are setting up this year probably the same sort of thing. That is the requirement that every department set up a reserve at the beginning. Actually, when the final spending figures for the year 1939 come out you will find that a great many departments have failed to use their entire appropriation. In other words, a great deal of money actually has gone back into the Treasury.

Q You say you are setting up the same thing this year. Have you ordered that?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know whether the Director of the Budget has sent it out over his own signature or is waiting to bring it to me.

Q It is promised?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Does it call for a specific cut?

THE PRESIDENT: No, it is not a percentage. It is based on figures. Just as a simple illustration: A department that is wholly one of Government service such as, for example, the Bureau of Standards or the Bureau of Mines, that falls into a different category from an amount allocated to Army aviation. Obviously, in

the latter case a percentage cut would mean a percentage cut in the actual number of planes bought for the Army.

Q Mr. President, there were a couple of questions up there, the answers to which I could not catch up here. Did somebody ask you what you expect to accomplish by the conference of legislators tonight?

THE PRESIDENT: I hope to accomplish progress.

Q On what, neutrality?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Can you give your views on the Barden amendment to exempt a million and a half people from the Wages and Hours law?

THE PRESIDENT: I think so. As I have had the amendment described to me, it would, in effect, pick out the two million lowest and poorest paid employees of industries who are the principal beneficiaries of the Act, and would lift them out from the Act and, in effect, would give Congressional sanction to unconscionably low wages for them.

Q Mr. President, will you ask for a deficiency appropriation for the Wage and Hour Administration?

THE PRESIDENT: Have I?

Q Will you in this session?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it has gone up.

Q Today?

THE PRESIDENT: It went up yesterday or the day before.

Q Have you considered a successor to Mr. Swanson?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Do you plan to, any time soon?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, sir.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #564,
In the President's Study at Hyde Park,
July 21, 1939, 11.27 A. M.

Q Good morning, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Glad to see you. Dick (Mr. Harkness), good morning.

Gosh, for some of you it is a new experience up here. By the way, I was delighted to hear about the eight and a half pounds.

Q (Mr. Reynolds, of the United Press) That is right; going to run for President in 1966.

MR. HASSETT: He was nine pounds yesterday.

Q And it will be ten tomorrow. (Laughter)

Q (Mr. Trohan) That comes from an old father, Mr. Hassett.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not believe I have a single thing. I had a good night's sleep and I am still sleepy.

Q (Mr. Durno) Mr. President, the isolation group in the Senate is predicting very freely that you are going to carry the neutrality issue to the country in your forthcoming western swing. Can you comment on that?

THE PRESIDENT: On the neutrality issue?

Q The arms embargo.

THE PRESIDENT: Isn't that closed until January?

Q Well --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) By action of the Senate? I think that is the best way of handling it. There is no and there cannot be any immediate issue before the country because certain groups in the Senate just precluded any action until January, making it perfectly clear, of course, -- and they have accepted it --

that the responsibility rests wholly on that.

Of course, one of the important things to bring out on that -- what was it? Tuesday night -- is the fact that they were willing to accept the responsibility. And, as Steve (Mr. Early) told you yesterday, about all we can do between now and January is to pray that there won't be another crisis, and pray awfully hard.

Q (Mr. Harkness) After the session on Tuesday, various participants, various Senators, gave their version of the meeting, what they had said to you, and more, what you had said to them.

THE PRESIDENT: It is like the old story of the Congressman that went in to see Mr. Hoover, I think it was, and was actually in Mr. Hoover's office by a stop watch for a minute and a half and then went out into the lobby and took ten minutes to tell the Press what he had told President Hoover. I have always loved the story. You remember that?

Q (Mr. O'Donnell) Yes, and I remember the Congressman too.

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead, I did not mean to interrupt.

Q (Mr. Harkness) That is a fitting story, and that is the way I meant it. But there was only one side of that conference came out and I wondered if you had anything to say about the conference itself.

THE PRESIDENT: Except this, that any stories that there was any -- I do not know -- what is the term for it?

Q I used "clashes," "verbal clashes."

THE PRESIDENT: "Clashes," right. I think it was John (Mr. O'Donnell) that said it was bitter. Did you ever see me bitter, John?

Q (Mr. O'Donnell) No, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: There weren't any clashes. That part is entirely made up out of whole cloth. There was only one disagreement between two people in the conference and that was the fact -- this has been printed -- the fact was that Senator Borah did intimate rather clearly and definitely that his information, his private information from Europe was better than the information received by the United States Government from Europe and the Secretary of State asked him if he intended that as a suggestion that the State Department information was not as good as his own private information. He finally said that he had meant to infer that. It was all in very parliamentary language.

Q (Mr. Harkness) Did Vice President Garner step into that situation?

THE PRESIDENT: No, he did not.

Q (Mr. Harkness) Did the Vice President use this line, "Captain, we may as well be candid; you haven't got the votes"?

THE PRESIDENT: No. No. When it became perfectly clear from a statement by the Republican Leader that the Republicans would vote en masse for postponement until January, and then Senator Barkley said there would probably be sufficient Democrats to go along with them to prevent a vote being taken if Congress stayed in session, nobody had to say anything more. That was obvious.

No, the thing came down to that simple fact, that the Republicans as a whole were going to work against the taking of a vote until January, one hundred per cent of them, and that about a third of the Democrats were going to do the same thing. That does not even raise the question of whether there was a

minority or a majority because, under the Senate rules, any sizeable group can prevent action. And the statement, of course, as written, did show the acceptance of responsibility by the Republicans and by Barkley in the sense that Barkley knew he could not get a vote, but only in that sense.

Q (Mr. Harkness) Senator McNary did definitely accept?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes. The responsibility? Oh, yes.

Q (Mr. Harkness) Is there anything at all you can tell us about the Department of State information which was at issue between Secretary Hull and Senator Borah?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I would say from every capital in Europe, without exception, with respect to evidences of preparing for an eventuality that they believe to be fairly close, for the very simple reason that the preparations are moving at a very fast rate, of course emphasizing always what has been said, has been printed and everything else, that it is not any allegation of probability, it is a statement of definite possibility. There is all the difference in the world between those two (words) and the members of the Senate who have decided to defer action until January have been gambling that the possibility won't eventuate. Therefore, there is nothing further to discuss. The country understands it.

Does that cover it, Dick (Harkness)?

Q (Mr. Harkness) Yes, sir. I covered that and, after the conference, we checked different Senators and wanted to know about some of the statements.

THE PRESIDENT: It was an extremely friendly meeting, absolutely, all the way through.

Q (Mr. Belair) You mentioned that we won't have another crisis before January. Won't it take something more than perhaps a crisis to provoke a special session?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q (Mr. O'Donnell) More than a crisis? In other words, an armed conflict?

THE PRESIDENT: In other words, more than mere threat. For the last three or four years there have been recurring threats. So far they have not eventuated in actual war. Another threat may come without eventuating in actual war. But the United States is not in a position to help in a situation of that kind under the present law -- embargo -- and the members of the Senate, the other night, were fully apprised of that; that was a perfectly clear statement, and several of them accepted the thought that there would be no special session until and unless a world war had actually broken out. In other words, they accepted the responsibility of saying to the Executive Branch of the Government, "There is nothing further you can do to avert war."

Does that cover it, Bill?

MR. HASSETT: I should think so.

Q (Mr. Harkness) May I ask this point? Along that line, would you say that you fired one shot in September in the interests of peace?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q And then another shot and then you had no more ammunition?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes; that is right.

Q That fits in?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q (Mr. Durno) Can you tell us about your conference yesterday with Mr. Norris and Mr. Jewell of the Railway --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Well, I told them the action I had taken. I did not put anything down in writing on it but I told Congressman Lea to tell the Rules Committee that I hoped they would give them a rule on two grounds, the first -- mind you, this does not relate to details of a bill but it does relate to principles -- the first is that something, away back a year ago we thought that something ought to be done to improve the railroad situation and I recommended that action be taken by this Congress. They have been there six and a half months and nothing has been done. I hope, this being apparently the only vehicle for getting it out onto the floor, that they will get a rule and report this bill out.

Q (Mr. Durno) Which bill is that?

THE PRESIDENT: That is the Lea Bill.

And then the other thought was, and it is absolutely in line with what I have been talking about so long, was that of trying to get all forms of transportation coordinated so that we won't have wholly separate agencies running policies, that is, general transportation policies.

It was in line with that that I told Bill Hassett to dig up the speech I made in Salt Lake City. He can show it to you. There is no use my reading the whole damned thing again. It was the speech back in 1932 in which I said, "The individual railroads should be regarded as parts of a national transpor-

tation system. This does not mean all should be under one management..... Let it be noted, for instance, that our Postal Service uses every variety of transport: rail, automobile, steamship, and airplane; but it controls practically none of these vehicles. We might well approach the railroad problems from a similar point of view -- survey all of our national transportation needs -- determine the most efficient, the most economical means of distribution, and substitute a national policy for a national lack of planning and encourage that growth and expansion which is most healthful to the general welfare."

And then, at the end, "...avoid financial excesses; adjust plant to traffic; protect the workers; coordinate all carrier service ..... and above all, serve the public, serve them reasonably, serve them swiftly, and serve them well."

Well, it is just along the same general idea that we are working toward.

Q This consolidation would be done under your reorganization powers, would it?

THE PRESIDENT: No; it has got to be done by straight legislation.

Q Something along the lines of the Emergency Transportation Act?

THE PRESIDENT: No. There are two or three different forms in which the thing can be actually put into practice. The form does not count nearly so much as getting it done. They have been working on it now for six and a half months and nothing has happened.

On the neutrality thing, I have here forty-five newspaper editorials -- this is our regular stuff from the files -- that are quite interesting as showing how widespread is the general

approval by the Press, regardless of party, for having something done to make the United States neutral and helping to avert war. It is a most amazing series of editorials. Here is the old Boston Herald, for instance; the Philadelphia Inquirer, the Portland Oregonian, the Los Angeles Times, and so forth and so on. Bill (Mr. Hassett) can show them to you if you want to see any of them. It is a very interesting cross section of editorial opinion.

Q I had some figures the other day -- I forget who the authority was -- which showed, or alleged to show, that eighty per cent of the commodities bought from us by the Allies during the World War were commodities which would not fall under the present embargo in the event of war. I wonder how accurate that is?

THE PRESIDENT: If you count wheat and cotton and things like that, I suppose it is true but I think you will find that certain foodstuffs, and raw cotton entered into that picture, that eighty per cent, very largely.

Let me -- leave this off the record -- give you a little background on it that will bring it out. It is rather interesting. Let us put it this way: that we are concerned, rightly, to a certain extent with the prosperity picture, the business picture, the economic picture, and the failure of the Senate to take action, deferring everything until January, is, without any question, going to slow up the wheels of industry in this country. On your eighty per cent figure, a very large portion of that was agricultural products, wheat and so on. You will remember that while we were in the war we laid off bacon, and

meat, and tried to eat more fish so that we could ship the meats to the other side.

Well, that is agriculture, but on the other side of the picture you must remember all the manufactured articles that go over, the percentage of them that are wholly off the embargo list is much smaller. Most of them are for munitions of various kinds. Now, of course that brings up a very interesting question. You know that a very simple form of munitions is the little brass shell that goes into a 3-inch gun. That is for the piece the French call the 75's, and that is probably as destructive a weapon as there is. Now, the little 3-inch shell that goes into it is made of brass. How is it made? The principal and far most difficult process is turning out the brass pipe, because that is all it is, just plain common or garden variety of brass pipe like that that goes into the plumbing of a hotel or big house. I suppose ninety per cent of the labor is in that brass pipe.

Now, there is nothing to prevent that brass pipe from being shipped anywhere in the world. It is just brass pipe. Once it gets to a belligerent you do three things. There are three things. One is a little saw that cuts it off into lengths. A girl, one girl can run that, the pipe having arrived in 30-foot lengths. It slides down the table and gets to a certain point and gets chopped off. Number two, it goes into a press -- I have forgotten what they call it, a reamer, or something like that -- and that takes one end of the brass pipe and curls it over. That is the kind of machine that a girl can run. Then it goes to another machine -- they are one after the other in a row -- and that

squeezes the ends of that brass pipe together into a form with a little percussion hole in the end. Then the thing is done. There is your shell. All it needs to have put into it is the powder and the shell itself, but the brass casing is three operations, all of which do not represent, I suppose, more than five per cent of the actual cost of that cartridge.

Now, you cannot send that to a belligerent, but you can send the brass pipe, which is ninety or ninety-five per cent of the operation. Well, how do you draw a line between the destructive weapon and the brass pipe? I do not know. How do you draw the line between the raw cotton and the nitrates on the one side and the T. N. T. on the other? You take cotton and put it into a vat and you put the wet cotton into the T. N. T., into the nitrate, and you put in a few other small chemical ingredients, mix them all around, heat them to a certain point, then put them into another one and take it out and dry it and you have high explosive. It is made out of cotton and nitrate. They are not themselves in the nature of implements of war. How does the human mind draw a fine line?

Q (Mr. Belair) Do you mean that business is suffering because --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I had a businessman -- I will tell you his name if you won't use it, we will have to have that understanding because I cannot give you his name -- it is Clarence Dillon. He said, "You know this is going to slow up the finest little eonomic boom that ever happened. Nobody can make commitments. They do not know how the bill will come out. That affects us here as well as on the other side."

Q It means on the brass pipe, or everything?

THE PRESIDENT: On anything; the taking of orders. It makes war more probable. People do not like to give orders for anything, even back home.

Q (Mr. Harkness) May we use that incident, sir, about the effect on business, without the name?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. A newspaper really needs a new press but they can get along with the present press for another year. Now, it takes some time to get a press built. You cannot just buy one off the counter. You say, "By Gosh, if there is a war, I do not know; I do not know whether we would be justified because nobody knows the effect of a war on a newspaper business." Isn't that right? So you say, "Let us wait until January."

Now, it is a few little things like that that make up people's minds as to whether they are going to buy something, order something, or not.

Q I have got enough to write, haven't you, gentlemen?

Q Yes.

Q I have quite a lengthy question. Speaking about war, the political situation here (referring to Dutchess County) is --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What has been happening the last two weeks?

Q Jim Benson received the nomination for sheriff on the Democratic ticket and I suppose you would like to see Jim win. There has been quite a movement on foot in the last two days to put Bonticou up for sheriff on the Republican ticket.

With respect to the indictments, I wondered whether you

might make a parallel or comparison with the Hoffman case in the earlier part of the century. Of course, it was at that time that all the turnover was made by the Hoffman scandal and, of course, the situation here is in some sense parallel with the Federal conspiracy case. I wonder if that suggests anything to you that we might use at all?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know how closely that particular parallel works because I am not sufficiently in touch with this situation. Let us put it this way: As you all know in the county, I have often voted for Republicans for county office where I thought that cleaning house was a good thing or that the Republican was a better man. In this particular case, in the sheriff's office, it seems to me that it has got to the point where a complete cleaning of the sheriff's office seems to be highly advisable. Not just a partial cleaning. How it is best to accomplish that, the voters of the county can determine.

Q May I use that in quotes?

THE PRESIDENT: No, but you can paraphrase it.

Q While it is a small item, we are having a very dry period here, Mr. President. We have not had a decent rain since the latter part of April, which is three months.

THE PRESIDENT: That is one thing I am doing. This afternoon I am going out to see whether my spruces are alive, the ones that we put in this year.

Q I do not know whether we will have to take the example of the West and ask for relief but we are getting pretty dry here.

THE PRESIDENT: It is getting dry.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: I will let Bill know who is coming over Sunday to the house. We have -- well, tomorrow night we are going down to the Morgenthaus' and that is the only date we have. We have some people coming to lunch but they are nearly all neighbors.

Q Are you going back Monday night?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes; Monday at twelve o'clock we are going to sign the deed for the north field here.

Jim Farley is coming up Sunday for the night, before he sails. He is coming up Sunday afternoon and spending the night and Monday at twelve noon we sign the deed and we have told the photographers that they can take pictures of the site or anything they want at the time.

Q That is over in this field over here (indicating)?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Twelve acres?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing has been done so far. They dug a couple of test pits to see what there is underneath.

Q (Mr. Cornell) When will you be back up here, or do you know?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know; I do not know yet.

Q Still four days after Congress adjourns we set sail?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. We are talking about a change of plan because it is so late, but we have not decided on it yet. The difficulty is that if they wait until the fifth of August or later, it is too late for me to go to Alaska on account of fog.

Q One of the Navy men said that fog is bad in that Inside Passage up there.

Q Can we pull out before Congress adjourns?

THE PRESIDENT: I may stay on this coast for a while and go to San Francisco later. I cannot tell yet but I will know in probably four or five days.

Q (Mr. Trohan) And then come back through Panama, Mr. President?

(Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No. (Laughter) It is bad guess Number -- well, you can put the number on.

Q That was not a guess; that was a question. (Laughter)

Q That was a wish. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I am afraid it was. I will tell you what we might do. We might tell Walter (Mr. Trohan) that we are going down to Panama and then he would slip off and get there a little ahead of time, and then we won't go at all and he would have had his holiday. (Laughter)

Q We are leaving Monday night, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know; Monday afternoon or Monday night. One or the other.

By the way, why don't you arrange about Rio, because we may go down there. (Laughter)

Q I have got another trip. I would cancel it to go down to Rio, though. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: You bet he would. (Laughter)

Q Incidentally, in that connection, I understand that Marshall (General Marshall) sold this fellow Monteiro (General Monteiro) completely on his trip. He had a little German leaning.

THE PRESIDENT: I understand that Monteiro was impressed. They showed him everything.

Q They certainly took him in. He was very enthusiastic.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, he was a nice fellow.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #565,
At the site of the Franklin D. Roosevelt
Library-Museum,
North Field, Hyde Park, New York,
July 24, 1939, 1.00 P.M.

(Mr. Farley sat alongside the President, in the President's car, during this Press Conference.)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, if I were writing the story, I am afraid I would have to make it very uninteresting because I am afraid I could not speculate and, I am afraid, I would have to stick to the truth, which is that we just had another of our regular talks that we have been having since 1928. This will be the eleventh year of them. They continue along the same tenor as they have for eleven years and there isn't very much story in that except that the results have been, on the whole, fairly effective and I think will continue to be fairly effective. What you can get out of that I don't know.

Q (Mr. Harkness) I know what we can get out of it.

THE PRESIDENT: It is a very good statement, isn't it, Jim?

MR. FARLEY: Perfect.

Q (Mr. Trohan) We will get a fine crop of speculations.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, sure. Of course you people who play the market speculate right along. You know what happens, don't you? It is all right. Nobody minds.

Outside of that, I do not think that either of us will tell you anything more. I think you are just up against it.

MR. FARLEY: Yes, I am going to see to that. There is nobody going to catch up with me.

THE PRESIDENT: That is right. It is going to be a very famous trip. There will be Jim and the girls and Johnny (Roosevelt) and Ann (Mrs. John Roosevelt), John Hamilton, Jouett Shouse, who else?

MR. FARLEY: Joe O'Mahoney, (laughter) Ham Fish (laughter).

THE PRESIDENT: It is going to be a great boatload and if somebody is not thrown overboard before they reach Southampton, I miss my guess, but it won't be Jim.

MR. FARLEY: If all the questions of state aren't solved after that, they will never have a chance.

Q Looks like a pretty tough crowd.

THE PRESIDENT: Jim is quite capable of taking care of our crowd, on the whole, all along.

MR. FARLEY: Well, I will have to be moving. Good-by, Boss. I will be in touch with you.

THE PRESIDENT: Fine, good-by.

(Mr. Frank Walker reported to the President that Dr. Connor, Archivist, had had an attack of indigestion. Mr. Walker reported that he was in the library and had recovered.

The President then told of a radio report about which he had been told to the effect that the lights were on in the Roosevelt house long after midnight. The President told the Press that everybody, including himself, had gone to bed about eleven o'clock.)

THE PRESIDENT: Isn't it amazing, the stories that go on? Luckily, the American people know, so it is all right.

I am coming back here right after Congress adjourns. That will be not next week but the following week.

Q Are you going to the West Coast?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, but later on. What I may do, probably, is to come back here for five or six days after Congress adjourns and finish up all the bills, the last-minute bills, and then go off on a cruiser up north to get some cold weather after a summer in Washington, for about a week's cruise, and then come back here and then go out to the Coast, toward the end of September.

Q North to Campobello?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and probably beyond that, so as to get some early cold weather.

Q And the trip to the Coast will be just directly to the Fair, I presume, and no big swing?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Will you go by way of Asheville?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I will go by way of Asheville, see Mac (Mr. McIntyre) and dedicate Great Smoky Park and then out to San Francisco, up to Seattle and back.

Q That will be late September, then?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q What cruiser, Mr. President; do you have any idea?

THE PRESIDENT: Probably the TUSCALOOSA.

Q Is that one of the new ones?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. That is one of the new light cruisers, just in commission. And, incidentally, do not say there is fishing because there isn't any fish up in those waters except things like cod and flounders. That does not mean I won't catch any, but it is not sport fishing.

MR. BELAIR: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #566,
Executive Offices of the White House,
July 25, 1939, 4.05 P.M.

THE PRESIDENT: You ought to have been up there. (Referring to Hyde Park)

Q (Mr. Young) As you come in, where was that field?

THE PRESIDENT: On the right-hand side of the drive, coming in.

Q Is it the big field?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, there are about eighteen acres there. We are calling it twelve acres to conform with the law but the fact is that it is eighteen acres.

Q What are you going to do with all the bees?

THE PRESIDENT: They are going to stay right there. They are ancestral bees.

Q (Mr. Young) Where you had the exhibit, it was on the left?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. This is on the right. That was a good exhibit.

Q (Mr. Young) Fine and dandy. I enjoyed that. I was the only reporter out there that morning.

THE PRESIDENT: You were the only one that got up that morning. I remember it well.

(Somebody made reference to "Butch," a nickname fastened on Mr. Felix Belair, of the New York Times, during the clambake at the Morgenthaus', held the previous Saturday.)

THE PRESIDENT: I did not originate that.

Q (Mr. Belair) But you made it stick.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, but I did not originate it.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think there is any news. We had a Press Conference yesterday and I do not think there is anything to add to it.

Q Have you sent a letter up on the Hill on oil to Congressman Lea?

THE PRESIDENT: Oil?

Q Conservation of oil, coming out of your conference a couple of days ago?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know.

MR. EARLY: Not to my knowledge.

Q It is a letter to Representative Cole.

THE PRESIDENT: I think there is, to Representative Cole and two others. There is no reason why it should not be made public.

Q What are your views on the Federal Government making a start on this elimination of tax exempt securities by permitting the paper that will be issued under this new lending program to be subjected to state and local taxes.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know about the legal point. I guess it is, anyway, is it not?

Q No, they would come under the R.F.C. and they would be tax exempt. There is some discussion at the Capitol as to whether the Government should make a start in this by letting these securities be taxed.

THE PRESIDENT: I have no objection because it carries out the principle.

Q Are you going to sign the Hatch Bill?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not got it. Has it come to the White House?

MR. EARLY: It is here, yes.

THE PRESIDENT: "It is here," says Steve, and it will go to the regular departments.

Q What department? Would that go to Justice?

THE PRESIDENT: Justice and -- let me see -- any departments that there is specific reference to.

Q Mr. President, there is a principle of government involved in that that you might like to comment upon.

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot tell you because I have not seen the bill in its final form. There may be a principle of government involved, such as Constitutional provisions for free speech. I do not know, because I have not read it.

Q For instance, there is Jim Bryan, who has attended Democratic Conventions for years. He works in the Treasury Department and of course he could not be a delegate.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that is not the Constitutional question I was speaking about. That is a different one. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, are you going to have any corroborations or denials or other comment on reports that Mr. Corcoran is trying to remove Mr. Farley as Chairman of the Democratic National Committee?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know what you can call it. You can call it tommyrot. Isn't that a good idea? (Laughter) That refers to your story, you see, and not to Mr. Corcoran. (Laughter)

Q I have been waiting for an opening to ask this question because it is secondhand. I am asking it for Mr. Lincoln of our paper. He wants to know if Mr. Farley will be Postmaster General when he comes back from his European trip?

THE PRESIDENT: Without question.

Q Yes, sir.

Q On the letter sent to Mr. Cole, did that go up today?

THE PRESIDENT: What was that?

Q To Mr. Cole on petroleum?

THE PRESIDENT: I sent it up from Hyde Park on Saturday. I think that is my best recollection. Pa Watson looks awfully worried. Will you look it up and see? It may be a wild dream on my part.

Q Mr. President, I understand that it is up there. (Referring to Capitol Hill)

MR. EARLY: That is the reason we do not know, if you sent it up from Hyde Park.

Q Can you tell us what you discussed this morning with Barkley and Rayburn, specifically on legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: Just a review of all the bills that are pending.

Q Did the question of adjournment come up?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and they both hope that they will adjourn next week.

Q Did you discuss the relief situation with Senator Murray this morning?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. President.

Q Just a minute. Will you stop in Maine, if you go up to Campobello?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think I will go ashore anywhere except possibly at Campobello.

Q Do you know the place where you will take off?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not yet.

Q Did you discuss how to get the spending-lending bill on the floor

of the House?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Did they tell you they may have trouble with the Rules Committee?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Do you think you will have trouble?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know.

Q I do not know who it is that tries to adjourn this Press Conference so quickly. I have a question. Have you given any thought to denouncing the commercial treaty with Japan?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know anything about it. I have not talked to the State Department since I left, except on a couple of other things.

Q It is the Vandenberg Resolution. That is simply a form of recommendation to the Executive. It is not in any sense binding, of course.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know, Fred.

Q Have you had an opportunity to discuss the Louisiana situation with the Attorney General?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Would you care to comment on it?

THE PRESIDENT: No; I do not know enough about it.

Q Have you acted on the new Niagara Falls Bridge Bill?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I signed it today.

Q Can you tell us anything about your talk with McNinch today?

THE PRESIDENT: No; we will probably have a story pretty soon but it is not ripe yet.

Q Anything on the Secretary of the Navy yet?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not a thing.

Q Anything on your acceptance of the invitation to the Young Democrats' Convention at Pittsburgh?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I do not think I will be able to go because I will probably be at sea but I will send a message.

Q Is it your understanding that the Niagara Falls Bridge is to be financed through the R.F.C.?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't any idea. All I know is that there aren't any tax exempt security features in the bill.

(There was a pause and the President said, "All right, May (Miss Craig), you say it.")

MISS CRAIG: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #567,
Executive Offices of the White House,
July 28, 1939, 10.40 A.M.

(Mr. Earl Godwin showed the President the cover of the last issue of Ken Magazine, which caricatured the President and the Press.)

THE PRESIDENT: This is off the record. (The President had not as yet looked at the cover.) I found this morning on the table, beside my bed, a memorandum from Steve (Mr. Early), dated about a month or six weeks ago, with respect to sending flowers to a certain gentleman who was in the hospital and was not expected to live. The gentleman in question is out playing golf now.

MR. EARLY: You should tell him that the memorandum has been here a month.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Look at your Press Conference there. (Indicating cover page of "Ken.")

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I do not think it is complimentary to the Press.

I am good looking there.

Q That is the last issue of "Ken." They fold up.

THE PRESIDENT: Do they, really?

Q With this.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, they ought to, after that.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think I have got any news at all. I asked Steve and he said I have no news, so it is all right.

Q Anything about your week-end plans?

THE PRESIDENT: I am going down tonight and back Sunday night.

Q Who will be with you?

THE PRESIDENT: Let us see; General Watson and General Early, Admiral McIntire and Admiral Frank Walker.

MR. EARLY: Admiral Callaghan.

THE PRESIDENT: Admiral Callaghan.

Q Are you going after marlin?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think so. It depends entirely on the weather as to where we go. It always does.

GENERAL WATSON. General Harry Hopkins.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes; General Harry Hopkins is going too.

Q Have you decided, sir, whether you will approve the Hatch Bill?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I am going to take a lot of documentary evidence down the riverwith me and discuss it with the Army and Navy.

(Laughter)

Q Have you had an opinion from Murphy (Attorney General Murphy) yet?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not yet.

Q (Mr. Godwin) I am thinking, it being the Hatch Bill, that you will have to discuss it with the Navy. (A chorus of hisses and boos)

THE PRESIDENT: Oh-h-h-h!

Q Throw him out.

Q (Mr. Godwin) It is down the hatch.

Q Can you tell us what phases of the bill you discussed with Senator Hatch yesterday? What specific phases you discussed with him?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, a great many phases were discussed. I think probably the most interesting phase is the language as to what Government employees can do and what they cannot do, the language being very vague, and also as to the problem of enforcing the law, as to who would enforce it, and also the problem of

state and other Government employees -- non-Federal.

Q Mr. President, do you care to make any comment on Mr. Lewis' attack on Mr. Garner yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think that the same gentleman said some things about me a little while ago and there was no comment.

Q That is a very discouraging statement you made about the Hatch Bill.

THE PRESIDENT: I would not take it that way.

Q I took it that way. Frankly, I thought you were trying to discourage us.

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think one wants to study the implications of language that is very general in its terms. I will give you a simple example: Suppose you are a voter and also a Federal employee: Can you go to a political meeting?

Q You mean under the bill?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q I felt I could.

THE PRESIDENT: That is the point, nobody knows.

Q You mean attend a rally or go to a political meeting?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Now then, your best friend is running for office and asks you to sit on the platform. Can you do that?

You see, there are all kinds of implications. You have a friend and yet you are a Government employee. You are anxious to have him elected and, without solicitation, you send him a check for twenty-five dollars. There are all kinds of implications in it. I do not know.

Q It would clearly -- let me take a specific example of a man in Washington who has been very prominent in the Democratic National

Committee, Mr. Colpoys. That would clearly rule him out.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes, as such. No question about that. That is taking part as an official in a party election. That is an entirely different thing. Nobody is raising that question. There are a lot of Government employees that want to know whether they can attend a political meeting, whether they can sit on the platform, whether they can contribute.

Q Doesn't Senator Hatch say they can?

THE PRESIDENT: Read the language and you will get as many opinions for a hundred possible cases as there are people in this room. For every opinion one way, you will get an opinion the other way. That is the real problem. What can people legitimately do is a very, very broad question.

Q Can you ask for clarification without a veto?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. We are merely studying at this time what people can do and what they cannot do.

Q Just for the record, do you favor the objectives of the bill?

THE PRESIDENT: Favor the what?

Q Objectives.

THE PRESIDENT: Absolutely.

Q Have you satisfied yourself on the constitutionality of it as yet?

THE PRESIDENT: Isn't that a secondary -- not a secondary consideration -- isn't that a necessary implication of studying what people can do and cannot do? That is the answer to that.

If, under it, it should be construed by this Administration or some other administration that you cannot go to a political meeting, then there is a great question of whether that would

make it unconstitutional.

Q Do you think there would be any question?

THE PRESIDENT: That is the whole point of it. That is what we are studying. In other words, it is purely in the study stage and do not, any of you, go out on the limb because we have not any other consideration than definite questions. There are fifty different kinds of cases: Can a Government employee do this or cannot he? That is all. We have not got beyond that. So don't, please, write about what is going to happen, because that has not been taken up.

Q It was stated on the air that you were going to send the bill back for clarification?

THE PRESIDENT: Now you are going to a phase that has not been taken up yet.

Q I said that because --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I know; I have read all kinds of things.

Q Does your study include the question of whether it might result in the strengthening of state political machines?

THE PRESIDENT: It has not been considered from the political angle at all.

Q Do you consider the bill definitely phrased so that Government workers could not attend a political convention?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, how many people are there in the room? You will get 150 different opinions. There will be many questions. Where do you sit, in the back or on the platform? Do you applaud? And so forth and so on.

Q There is some mention in the bill of benefits, so that some people

reading the bill think that a farmer receiving benefits might be affected.

THE PRESIDENT: I never heard of that.

Q It says any person receiving work relief or relief, and the interpretation on the Hill is that parity payments can be construed as relief, as can any other agricultural payments.

THE PRESIDENT: There you are. That raises an interesting point. I never heard of it until this morning. What is relief?

Q Mr. President, are you ready to say approximately when the country may expect a statement on the third term?

THE PRESIDENT: Statement on what?

Q Are you willing to say approximately when the Nation can expect a statement on the third term?

THE PRESIDENT: No. (Laughter)

Q May I revert --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) And that is being awfully kind. I did not crack down on anybody. It is all right. The answer was, "No."

Q Jake Baker, of this employees' association, is supposed to have sent you a message calling your attention to another bill, the Ramspeck Bill, which extends civil service throughout and does the same thing, has the same objectives as the Hatch Bill. Have you received such a communication from Mr. Baker?

MR. EARLY: Not to my knowledge.

THE PRESIDENT: No. Of course, as you know, I have always gone along with Ramspeck to try to extend the civil service to a great many of those agencies which are, by Act of Congress -- not by my act -- kept out of civil service.

Q Mr. President, have you any comment on the Rules Committee action yesterday in reporting out all of the different amendments to the Wages and Hours Act?

THE PRESIDENT: Only that after you get all kinds of legislation to the floor you are more apt to get action than if all kinds of legislation remain in the Committee. In other words, it is a hopeful step towards August fifth adjournment.

Q Any comment to make on the lending bill as it is before the Senate now?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't had any time to read what happened last night in the Senate.

Q The abrogation of the 1911 treaty; is that a step to embargoes?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think, Pete (Brandt), anything further need be said on that today. Ask the State Department.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #568,
Executive Offices of the White House,
August 1, 1939, 4.12 P.M.

Q Mr. President, good morning, how are you?

THE PRESIDENT: Russ (Mr. Young), how is the infant coming along?

Q (Mr. Young) Very well indeed. What about the big seventy-pound fish you did not catch?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Did you notice the newspaper accuracy on it?

Q (Mr. Godwin) There has been a good deal of faking on that since Jonah's whale.

Q Pa (General Watson) says that he has got $50. that says he caught the biggest fish. Is that right?

THE PRESIDENT: Pa always catches the biggest fish. No. As a matter of fact, I caught far and away the best fish on the trip. I never saw one before. It was a ten-inch mackerel. I had him for breakfast and it was the most delicious fish I ever ate.

Q How did you know it was a mackerel?

THE PRESIDENT: It had all the fins.

Q How big are they ordinarily?

THE PRESIDENT: Three feet; two or three feet.

Q Hadn't you ought to have thrown him back?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know if there is any law on that but anyway it is inside of me now, so it is safe. Gosh, it was good. It was the most delicious I ever tasted.

Q Mr. President, I caught a ten-inch trout.

THE PRESIDENT: But this mackerel was better than any trout I ever tasted.

Q It was that long and that round (indicating); like an eel.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, you mean sea trout. They are all right if you eat them within an hour, otherwise they get soft.

Q Yes. We cut them up and salt them in brine.

Q (Mr. Young) A big gate today.

THE PRESIDENT: Did you ever try baking a fish in mud? It is the most delicious thing in the world. It is all solid and then you crack it open. You use nice good, clean clay.

Q Is that so?

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: We have answered all the questions in the front row while you were all coming in in the back row.

Q Did you hear about the House vote on the lending bill?

THE PRESIDENT: I did. I have not had an analysis on it yet.

Q Any comment on it?

THE PRESIDENT: How did it line up?

Q 193 to 166 refusal to help the rule. There were 147 Democrats, the count showed, joining the Republicans.

THE PRESIDENT: Practically a solid Republican vote?

Q Yes; very few opposed, one or two.

THE PRESIDENT: I think this, by way of comment: We have to look at the results. If we do not get legislation at this session, if we had been able to start the lending program, the effect of it would have been felt by industry within from sixty to ninety days. In other words, orders would have begun to flow in to industrial plants. That would have put people to work and, almost automatically, a certain proportion of those people put

to work would have been taken off the relief rolls, thereby accomplishing the fact of reducing Government expenditures for relief, thereby reducing taxes to the average taxpayer and, at the same time, giving employment without permanent cost to the Government or to the taxpayers.

So, the net result is, from that point of view, that the failure of the bill is automatically going to cost the taxpayers of the United States quite a lot of money, a good many hundreds of millions of dollars and, at the same time, will mean that a large number of industrial plants will not have their production stepped up in the same way as if the bill had gone through. There will be more people who will have to be taken care of on relief than if the bill had gone through. That is perfectly obvious and, of course, the people who were responsible for the failure to adopt the rule have an absolute -- Congress has an absolute right to make that determination, so there can be no possible criticism of the action of Congress, except that there is an absolute right on the part of the taxpayers of the country and the people on relief in the country and the industrial plants of the country to know exactly where the responsibility lies and, of course, an equal right to ask the names of the people or parties who voted against the rule.

Now, of course that can all be reduced, very simply, to figures. I have not had any chance to have the thing reduced to figures of dollars or of human beings, but it is a very simple thing to figure out how many dollars would have gone out, let us say within a year, under the lending bill if it had gone through.

We know how many people, from past experience, very definitely, how many people are put to work for every dollar spent on public improvements of various kinds. So, if you figure the number of dollars that would have been spent within a year on public works by the lending method, you will be able to find out the number of people who would have been put to work under that program within a year and, per contra, you can see how many people will fail to get work through the failure of the bill.

And then, we also know, in spending public money, what proportion of people on public works are drawn from relief rolls and it means that those people have to be taken care of on relief, as they are at the present time, rather than removed from the relief rolls.

That is about the long and short of it.

Q Do you recall what those figures are, by any chance?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q On that tax, can you elaborate? Can it be interpreted that this new tax bill will call for higher taxes on the public to meet the situation?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q What did you mean when you said it called for higher taxes and more taxes?

THE PRESIDENT: Because every man that we take care of on the relief rolls costs the people some taxes, does it not?

Q I thought you meant additional taxes.

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q You did not recall those dollars and the people, the proportion.

Does this refresh your memory at all? I may be wrong about it, but for every man on the Public Works payroll, Secretary Ickes used to say that there were three or three and a half men behind the line. Does that bring anything up?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. That was the figure that was used on all P.W.A. estimates and checked back after the actual work was done, and that was the figure, about three and a half people are put to work behind the lines for every person that is put to work on the job itself.

Q Would that apply?

THE PRESIDENT: That would apply in this case, the same thing.

Q But you do not know how many dollars it took to put one man to work on P. W. A.? You do not recall?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Have you any plans to meet the situation while Congress is still in session.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think there is anything to be done.

Q Will you ask for a larger relief appropriation?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Congress has determined that already.

Q Is it a fair guess that this matter will come up at the next session to be urged by you, sir, at the next session?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know, Fred (Mr. Essary). I only got to that point. I only heard about it about an hour and a half ago. I do not think that fast.

Q There was also talk at the Capitol that the $800,000,000. housing bill will go down also, as a result of this same Congressional attitude?

THE PRESIDENT: As you know, also on the housing proposition, one of the principal objectives was to begin slum clearance in a great many of the smaller cities of the country.

The first lot, you might say, of projects that were put into effect last year have related to the most, what might be called, the most important and crying needs of the larger cities in the country and we are now getting down to the point of being able to make a dent in the slum conditions in many of the smaller cities so that it would affect pretty nearly every state of the Union in the course of the coming year, and that, of course, would have meant putting a great many people to work.

Q That is not yet killed?

THE PRESIDENT: No, but, as I say, if it is killed also, a great many people would lose a chance for a job which they otherwise would have got.

Q There is a housing program that has not yet run out of money. Isn't that so?

THE PRESIDENT: That is perfectly true but, as you know, there are applications in that will more than take care of all that money and it takes quite a while after an application first comes in to get the plans and everything all through and there is not, actually, enough money still available to meet all the applications that are already in.

Q Going back to those figures once more, did you determine, even in round numbers, how much employment you figured your lending program would give?

THE PRESIDENT: No, because that involves my knowing how many people

or how many dollars are necessary to put an individual workman to work on a project and I do not remember the figure.

Q Senator Barkley said in his report to the Banking and Currency Committee that it would create 500,000 new jobs.

THE PRESIDENT: If he said that, it is probably correct. Senator Barkley would not have made the statement unless he had pretty good authority.

Q We understood that to be the first-line jobs and not those behind the lines.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. Jones said there was $1,300,000,000. of lending authority in the R. F. C., and as I read your program, it only called for $700,000,000. expenditure during the next year. Couldn't this be very easily taken care of by a little change in the authority of lending? That is, couldn't the three billion --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) That is essentially what this bill did. It was just to take care of these "litty bitty" things that would make those existing funds available.

Q But it did not sound "litty bitty" the way you put it out.

(Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. You know you can accomplish a lot sometimes with just a few words and it does sound fairly important when a "litty bitty" change will put five hundred thousand people to work in the front lines. Isn't that right? That is something to think about.

Q Of course they contended, up on the Hill, that most of these things the R. F. C. could do now and that they had the three billions.

THE PRESIDENT: And the R. F. C. would do them now if they had a "litty bitty" change, and that is what we were asking for in this bill.

Q One of the criticisms raised was that you were trying to circumvent the $45,000,000. constitutional --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Now, let me ask you a question, a very simple question: Suppose there is a bank that has got a million dollars of deposits in your home town, which is a good average small town bank. It has got a million of deposits. Of course that is a direct debt from that bank to the people who put money into it. It is a direct debt. Would it be fair to you to get up in the Congress, or on the stump, or write an editorial and say, "We wish to call your attention to the fact that the First National Bank of this town has a debt of $1,000,000. We wish to call your attention to the fact that this is a tremendous sum for the First National Bank to owe." And then you end your editorial or speech on that note. Would that be fair?

And yet, that is what every one of these people are saying. Now, of course it would be fair if you said, "Yes, it owes a million dollars but it has assets for that million dollars and more besides because it has got all of its paid-up capital in addition to that million dollars which stands behind the debt of the million to the depositors." Therefore is it a fair proposition to say that, when the Government borrows money and then lends that money out -- in other words, it is doing just exactly what the First National Bank of Squeedunk is doing -- that the Government is that much indebted? Is that any different

case from the case of the First National Bank? Isn't it fair to say that the Government has received for its million dollars which it has borrowed and then loaned, certain security, certain assets, certain promises to pay, just like when it buys, when the bank buys the mortgage of the farmer, takes a mortgage on his farm and lends him the money?

The Government, in this case, puts the money out on good security, a straight credit basis.

It is worth remembering, in that connection, back in 1934 -- you read the Congressional Record for the spring of 1934 and you will find speech after speech that was made in the Senate and the House by the Republicans and a few Democrats that all this business of Jesse Jones lending out this money, why, it was all bunk, that we would never get the money back, that we would be darned lucky if we ever got fifty per cent of the money back. Read it in the Congressional Record. And the Director of the Budget at that time came in with a long face, day after day, and said, "Mr. President, you should not accept Jesse Jones's statement that he is going to get back practically all of the money that he has been lending out." He said, "You will be everlastingly lucky if Jesse Jones gets back half the money he ever lends out." He pulled a long face so often that I was afraid he was not in sympathy with what we were doing and he got out. (Laughter)

And of course the record shows that he was wrong and these people in the House and Senate were wrong because Jesse Jones has got it all back. Now, there is the record and they are pulling the same old line at the present time. They are saying,

"This lending money, you will never get it back." The same crowd is saying it that said it in 1934. There is nothing new in this world. It is all the same idea.

Q Would you like to say a few words in commemoration of the historical significance of tomorrow? Tomorrow will be the twelfth anniversary of the statement of former President Coolidge that he did not choose to run. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Are you suggesting that I should take my summer holiday in the Black Hills?

Q No, sir; I merely wanted a few words in commemoration.

THE PRESIDENT: I think, on my summer holiday I am going to be away, off at sea, and I am going to take three gentlemen of the Press, from the Press Associations, who will follow me on a destroyer. I hope for their sake it will be a smooth sea. Everything that they send in from the destroyer, you see, has to go through me. (Laughter) So you will get duly censored news all the time I am away. That is the only case where we have censorship of the Press. Then, when they get sick, I will have to write their stories for them, so that will be that much worse.

Q There is a bill in the Senate, a measure that extends the life of the civil liberties measure. It is jammed up somewhere. Do you know about that?

THE PRESIDENT: I have said it before and I want to make it just as strong as I possibly can, that I hope that amount will be given by the Senate Committee to extend the work of that Civil Liberties Committee.

As I understand it, they thought a year ago, a year ago last

spring, just before the session ended, that if they got the final $50,000., it would complete their work. But, as the investigation went on last fall, they uncovered a great many new things that they believed were violations of certain civil liberties and they believed that those new things ought to be investigated but Senator La Follette felt that, having given his word that that final $50,000. would be the final $50,000., he felt that he ought not to ask for any more. He made a statement on the floor that that was the only reason he had not asked for it, but he and his colleagues actually felt and stated that they ought to have it to look into those new things that they had uncovered, so I hope very much, for the sake of civil liberties in this country, that the allocation of money will be given to them.

Q In connection with the visit today of the Mexican Ambassador to see you, can you tell us anything about the letter which I understand he brought?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not yet.

Q Can that be made available?

THE PRESIDENT: No, it is a personal letter.

Q Mr. President, do you feel that this southern group made out a case against the 32½¢ minimum wage?

THE PRESIDENT: I am looking into it. In other words, the case presented lay between 30¢ an hour and 32½¢ an hour, or a total of 20¢ a day, but they stated that that 20¢ a day would cause a very large number of small southern mills to close up for various reasons. So I am going to do some checking on it.

Q Can you tell us about your talk with Mr. Archibald McNeil of Connec-

ticut?

THE PRESIDENT: No, he just came in to say, "How do you do?" I have not seen him for about a year.

Q Have you made up your mind what you are going to do about the Hatch Bill?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Would you care to tell us?

THE PRESIDENT: No. (Laughter)

Q Would you care to tell us --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I think you will get something tomorrow.

Q On civil liberties, did I understand that only the Press Associations are going with you on your northern trip?

THE PRESIDENT: That is all, Russ (Young).

Q Just for the record, that is all. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Why don't you get hired by a Press Association for the occasion?

Q No, thanks.

Q Will Senator Hatch have any desire to have that pen as a souvenir? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: That is not even subtle.

Q To go back to the cotton manufacturers, are you considering a differential as well as the amount of the recommended minimum?

THE PRESIDENT: No. You know my position on the question of minimum wages. For a long time I felt there should be a differential between those parts of the country where the cost of living was definitely higher, in other words, where in one part of the country you could maintain exactly the same standard of living

as in the other part of the country for a little bit lower price, a little bit lower living cost. I have always been in favor of that, a small differential, and that was very well exemplified and carried out in the N. R. A. provision where they had, I think in the North it was $12. and in the South $11. That was, roughly, a ten per cent differential. It was the lower South, where you do not have to have furnaces and winter overcoats and so forth and so on. There is a definite differential.

Q Is that substantially what you told those people today, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Your conversation with the Mexican Ambassador, would you say there was any likelihood of negotiating that oil settlement soon?

THE PRESIDENT: We did not talk about that.

Q Will there be a Message --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No, that is not subtle.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #569,
Executive Offices of the White House,
August 4, 1939, 10.44 A.M.

Q Look at that necktie! (Referring to necktie worn by General Watson)

Q Watson's necktie!

Q You do not have to look at the mirror.

Q It is a breakfast egg tie.

Q (Mr. Young) Do you think you will go down the river tomorrow?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I will stay right here. Bills will begin coming in tomorrow, I hope.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think there is any news. The plans are that -- Rudolph (Mr. Forster) says there are about 350 bills, somewhere between that and 400, that are due to come to us -- after the Congress has adjourned, I will stay here for two full days to see any members of the House or Senate that want to come in and talk about anything and, incidentally, I will sign bills on the side. Then I will go up to Hyde Park and keep on signing bills for nearly a week -- and vetoing. Then I will get on the cruiser and disappear for a little while.

Q How long do you intend to disappear, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: A week or ten days.

Q Where will you board the cruiser, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know yet definitely; probably New York.

Q Mr. President, I know you do not anticipate things of this sort, but there is a Civil Service Retirement Bill which you possibly

know all about by now. Do you intend to sign it?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know enough about it, Earl (Mr. Godwin). The general principle is pretty good. I have not seen the bill in its final form.

Q Have you signed a bill for refunding about a million and a half dollars to the Muskegon Conservancy District of Ohio?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q You have not signed it?

THE PRESIDENT: It is to reimburse for the purchase of that land?

Q Yes.

Q Getting back to the cruise, when you finish with the cruise are you going back to Hyde Park or here?

THE PRESIDENT: Probably at the end of the cruise we will turn around and come back here because I will have been away for about two weeks. I probably will come back here for a while and then go to Hyde Park and between then and October I will divide my time between here and Hyde Park.

Q Where does that put the western trip?

THE PRESIDENT: About the first of October.

Q Do you agree or disagree with the statement of Senator Taft to the effect that no sensible person will want to be President after 1941? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No sane person, did you say?

Q No sensible person.

THE PRESIDENT: Did he say that about his own candidacy? (Laughter)

Q He said it in connection with his own candidacy.

Q Won't you answer?

THE PRESIDENT: Don't you think that is an awfully good answer that I have already given?

Q Have you found any more people with a passion for anonymity yet?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet.

Q Are there to be three more appointed or are you going to stand pat on the first three?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not going to stand pat on the first three. Whether I will appoint three more, I do not know. In other words, there is no reason why I should not tell you the exact situation. My general thought is that I will appoint two more and keep the sixth place vacant as a place to put in somebody to perform some special duty, some specific duty of a temporary character. That was the general thought originally and it seems to be a pretty good one.

Q Would that, then, be temporarily filled from time to time, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: If necessary.

Q Any comment on the House action on the housing bill yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: No comment. Res ipsa loquitur; including the roll call.

Q When will those two be appointed?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know.

Q Mr. President, there seems to be some conflict between the Army Engineers having charge of flood control projects and the engineers of the Bureau of Reclamation regarding the construction of some dams and reservoirs in the West. I believe you recently had some people here to talk over that situation. Is there

anything you can tell us about it?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. It goes back, really, to the first study of the reorganization steps two years ago. At that time we had two agencies that were building the larger type of dams. One was the Reclamation Service that has built Boulder Dam and was building Grand Coulee and the other was the Army Engineers that were building Fort Peck and Bonneville.

The feeling at that time was that these two construction agencies ought to be maintained and maintained in such a way for construction work that neither one of them would overwhelm the other, that there would be what might be called a healthy rivalry between the two big Government construction agencies instead of having the whole thing done by one. Both are extremely good.

The Army Engineers, in the past few years, have, of course, got away beyond, in their construction work, the Army personnel. It was thought, for that reason, that the Army Engineers should not become too big. They only have a limited number of officers that can do the work and it has got to the point where something like three-quarters of the Army Engineers' construction work was being done by civilian employees. The reason for keeping them from absorbing all the work is that their primary function is a military function. In case of war the Army Engineers are intended for service at the front, with the Army, the great bulk of them, and, therefore, we felt it would be a mistake to make them so big that they would do all the construction work. So we laid down what might be called a rule of thumb and that

was that they would continue to do all the harbor work, all the Mississippi work and all the river work where flood control was the primary function -- flood control and navigation, the two being tied together -- and to allocate, as a matter of policy, the rest of the work, that is to say, where it was on the upper reaches of a river, especially where navigation did not enter into it, to allocate the work in such a way that the Reclamation Service would be kept going with equal importance to the Army Engineers -- to keep both organizations functioning. Each one would be merely a check on the other. The result is that we have now a very excellent system worked out so that when a report is asked from either Reclamation or the Army Engineers it is studied by the other service.

If there is a question of a dam on the upper reaches of the river that has irrigation possibilities, we weigh the importance of the irrigation as compared to navigation and flood control and in some cases, of course, power enters into it to a certain extent. The system as worked out now will mean no crossing of wires but it will mean that if a dam is principally for irrigation it would be done normally by the Reclamation people and, if it is primarily for navigation, it would be done by the Army Engineers people.

Q Then in a hypothetical case, where say a dam was 50-50 for reclamation purposes and for flood control and there was no navigation, probably Reclamation would have more to say about it?

THE PRESIDENT: Probably, if it did not give, in the total construction work, too much work to Reclamation. The same thing, as a

hypothetical case, with Army jobs.

Q Do you plan to talk to the country, on your western trip, about this action in the House and Senate with respect to lending and spending?

THE PRESIDENT: I have absolutely no plans for speeches except the speech at Big Smoky.

Q What is the other one?

THE PRESIDENT: I have only two speeches, one at Great Smoky opening and the other is the San Francisco Fair. I do not think you can figure out a story on those two.

Q Have you studied any of your communications to get an indication as to the temper of the country?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know; I have not had any mail yet.

Q Did you discuss the Tammany leadership yesterday with Congressman Gavagan?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I did not, in any shape, manner or form.

Q One of the conferences in the House on the Third Deficiency Bill took out the $119,000,000. for the Commodity Credit Corporation. According to Secretary Wallace, this imperils the farm loan program. Any comment on that?

THE PRESIDENT: No, except that the Secretary is right.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #570,
In the President's Study at Hyde Park, N. Y.,
August 8, 1939, 12.30 P.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Who else is here? I am trying to see what paper Tommy (Mr. Qualters, the President's bodyguard) represents. (Laughter)

I have only 145 bills left to act on and they have not yet come to me. In other words, last night the last thing I did was to finish going through all the bills that I have got so that it is pretty good, and all that have come to me have been either signed or vetoed except about ten that were sent back for further information, and I still have 145 to come. Have we a pouch coming tonight?

MR. HASSETT: Probably tomorrow morning.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. So that by tomorrow morning I will probably get a good batch of the 145. I am not working on the bills today. I am trying to catch up with what you see on my desk. Did you ever see such a mess? (Laughter)

Sidney Hillman is coming to lunch. And after lunch, Jimmy Moffett is bringing the Shaikh (pronounced shake) or Shaikh (pronounced sheek) or Shaikh (pronounced shike), whichever way you want to pronounce it (Mohammed), of Bahrein. Of course you all know where that is. That is just to say, "How do you do?" Do any of you know Bahrein?

Q I hope not. How do you spell it?

MRS. ROOSEVELT: I am dying to know where it is.

THE PRESIDENT: Such absolutely crass ignorance I have never seen.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: Is it Arabia or northern Africa?

MR. HASSETT: You are doing very well, Mrs. Roosevelt.

THE PRESIDENT: You are getting hot.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: Tell me where it is.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it is an island in the Arabian Gulf, that is to say between Arabia and Persia. It is ruled by an independent Sheek, Shike or Shake (laughter) and it is a very excellent oil country.

Q How long, Mr. President, have you known of this? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I have always known it. I have always known it because, you see, I collect stamps.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: I regret to say that we have never been able to stump him on a question of geography. It is the most horrible thing. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you know where Muscat is. Heavens, I had the Sultan of Muscat as an official guest of the Government a year ago. Well, it is a little north of Muscat, just on the mainland of Arabia, but it is an island off the coast.

Q That is the fellow that gave you the golden --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Yes, the golden scimitar, or something like that. Anyway, it is an exceedingly effective weapon if properly used.

He (the Shaikh) is just coming up to say, "How do," that is all.

Outside of that I have absolutely no appointments except on Thursday -- well, you don't want to break that story yet. It is just the annual report of the National Infantile Paralysis Foundation. You had better wait for that until tomorrow.

Q You still have not told us how to spell the name of this --

MR. HASSETT (interposing) I have got this (indicating telegram) here. You can have it. You have it greatly abbreviated. You might read it now that you have it.

Q I don't know -- Shaikh here is spelled S-h-a-i-k-h.

Q This is spelled S-h-a-k-a-i-h.

MR. HASSETT: He calls it that, so I take it he is a professional beauty.

THE PRESIDENT: I would avoid your own way. There are great differences between the "a" and the "e". You had better stick to what Bill (Hassett) says. You would insult him otherwise.

Q (Mr. Harkness) Mr. President, you stated yesterday that while Congress had refused to go along with one of the methods of the Supreme Court liberalization program, you had gained all of the objectives?

THE PRESIDENT: That is right. In other words, I note in stories that the other six objectives have been largely slurred over. Now the other six objectives, of course, were of interest to everybody in this country. They were of interest, first of all, in the expediting of cases -- of course we had all of this out -- because the delay in bringing cases to trial of two years and three years was always to the disadvantage of the poor litigant, whether he was plaintiff or whether he was defendant. In other words, he could not afford to wait and the rich litigant could afford to wait two or three or four years, as very often happened. Therefore, the speeding up of the calendars has made a great deal of difference in affording adequate and proper justice in all of the jurisdictions of the Federal Courts. I do not think that that,

from the point of view of justice, is worth slurring over as an accomplishment.

Now, of course, that has been greatly aided by two of the seven things that went through. The first was the retirement privileges, which have enabled older judges, who could not work as fast as younger judges, to retire, and the other three -- actually three out of the seven -- has helped that. The next was the appointment of additional judges in those judicial districts where there weren't enough judges to handle the number of cases. The bill for that has not come to me yet but I will undoubtedly sign it when it does, making a total of thirty new judges.

And then connected with that a little bit, but more on the constitutional end, two of the other bills are of very great importance because, in the past, two private litigants could, in a private suit between themselves, raise a constitutional question and that would be determined without any chance for the Government to appear in the case to defend the law that had been passed by the Congress. That has been taken care of by permitting the Government to intervene. The Government has to have notice served on it right away of the constitutional questions raised.

Then, along that same line, it has always been possible in the past, by injunction in the lower court, to tie up the whole case again for two or three or four years on a constitutional question while the issue was working its way gradually up to the Supreme Court. Now, under the new legislation, it means that the constitutional question goes from the original court right away quick to the Supreme Court of the United States where it must be

put at the top of the preferred list of cases. That also saves the poor litigant a tremendous delay and, incidentally, it is saving the Government itself -- everybody -- by getting a determination of constitutional questions quickly instead of tying it up. We have, of course, lots of illustrations. On the N.R.A. it took months and sometimes several years to get the constitutional question before the Supreme Court. Now we can get it immediately before the Supreme Court as a preferred case.

I think it is very important to stress the fact that out of the seven objectives six were obtained -- and they are all very, very important objectives -- six were obtained by legislation and the seventh by the opinions and decisions of the Supreme Court itself, which is not bad.

Q (Mr. Harkness) A thousand per cent. It is a good batting average.

Mr. President, then the logical second half of the question is this: That the recent Congress also disagreed with you on method, particularly regarding neutrality and domestic recovery through the --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No, I would not say that, Dick. I would not say they disagreed on methods. What I would say is this: That they made a bet -- not the Congress, don't, for Heaven's sake, say "The Congress", but a substantially unanimous Republican minority in both Houses, both the House and Senate, plus about twenty per cent, twenty-two per cent of the House and twenty-five per cent of the Senate, have made a bet with this country that the President was wrong. And I hope they win their bet. But, if they do not win their bet, the responsibility is one hundred per

cent on a solid Republican minority plus a small minority of the Democrats.

And they have made this bet -- two bets with the Nation, and I hope they win. But it is taking a terrific chance. That is the other part of it.

Now, you see, that is not disagreement on method; that is a disagreement on what is now, today, both on neutrality and on cushioning the necessity of laying off a great many people this coming spring. On the neutrality end, they bet the Nation, made a large wager with the Nation, which may affect, if they lose it, about a billion and a half human beings. Now, that is pretty important. They have said, "There will be no war until sufficiently long after we come back in January so that we can take care of things after we come back," and I sincerely hope they are right. But, if they are not right and we have another serious international crisis they have tied my hands and I have practically no power to make an American effort to prevent such a war from breaking out. Now, that is a pretty serious responsibility.

If they are wrong, of course, and if the situation should get to a crisis with a lack of power on my part to try to avert it the way I did in September of 1938 and April of 1939, why, of course, it is perfectly obvious who will be solely responsible -- a solid Republican minority plus twenty to twenty-five per cent of the Democrats. And I hope they win their bet.

Then, on the other big wager they have made they have wagered the country that when the full effect of taking a million human beings off the relief rolls, which is about four million people

counting their families, during the course of this year, and, at the same time, having all the P.W.A. work coming to an end this coming spring, that private industry and private business will take up that whole slack without the Government doing anything about it. And I hope they win that bet too.

But, if they do not win, and private business and private industry do not put all these people, the million people on relief and the three millions dependent on them, and probably another million people on P.W.A. at the present time -- that is to say carrying out Public Works -- if they do not take up that slack then, in that case, again it is perfectly obvious that they have lost the bet with the Nation, and the Nation must and will hold them solely responsible.

I think that covers it pretty well.

Q (Mr. Belair) You have pretty well anticipated a question I was going to ask in that connection. I do not think I am overstating it very much by saying that the country pretty well expects a statement from you on the House rejection of the housing bill and the lending bill. Might that not be applied --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I think that covers the situation pretty well.

Q (Mr. Belair) The same thing?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, so far as your jobs and everything else is concerned, because, after all, it affects the newspapers of the country, it affects the advertising of the country, it affects the circulation of papers. We all know that. That is right, is it not, Dick (Harkness)?

Q (Mr. Harkness) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: We hope that it goes along all right but, if it does not, we know who will be responsible. It affects even radio. Right? So, just thinking from the point of view of the country, and the good of the world too, on the international end of it, I hope that they have that right.

Q (Mr. Harkness) This situation, Sir, presents a distinct challenge to business, does it not?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, a very definite; very definite. And they have a wonderful chance, because, at the present time the shelves of the country, all kinds of goods, are not overstocked. The only thing that is overstocked -- the only things that are overstocked are certain agricultural commodities. We have, perhaps, a little excess on the total wheat and we have a rather large excess on the total of cotton, and some excess in dairy products, but, so far as business goes, industry, the shelves are not overstocked.

I have not got any plans for speeches, because I have no plans ahead at all at the present time until that trip commences on the first of October. I only have two speeches outlined for that -- no, three -- one at Great Smoky, one at the San Francisco Fair and the other at the dedication of Olympic National Park. I don't think that even through surmise and guessing can you find great political occasions in those three events. Am I right?

Even persons who have been close to the Administration -- (Laughter)

Q (Mr. Belair) Pretty slim pickings.

THE PRESIDENT: I know it.

Well, you have got plenty of story today. Right?

Q Have you accepted an invitation to take part in the dedication of the Red Hook Central High School?

THE PRESIDENT: I told them last spring that we would fix a date and, so far, no date has been set. I am seeing Ben Frost tomorrow or the next day and will find out from him what date they would like to have it on and see if we can work it in because, you see, from the end of the cruise I will probably go right from the ship to Washington for a few days.

(Turning to Mr. Hassett) Let us tell them about -- do you want to hold it until Friday? My wife does not know this but she won't be there. You had better find out whether it is the Grand Duke of Luxembourg or whether it is the Consort of the Grand Duchess.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: It is the Consort, if it is the same as it was several years ago when I was over there, or has she died?

THE PRESIDENT: No, that is the boy, eighteen years old.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: Then I suppose it is the same.

THE PRESIDENT: You had better check and find out whether it is the Grand Duke or Grand something of Luxembourg. He and his boy are coming over to dedicate the Luxembourg Pavilion at the Fair. I cannot give you the exact date but it is about the twenty-eighth of August. They are coming to Washington to stop at the White House and I will be back from the cruise before that. Then I will come up here and then, from the twenty-ninth of August until the twenty-eighth of September, I will be about half the time here and half the time in Washington and, during that period that I am here, we will take some time to dedicate the Red Hook schoolhouse.

Q Have you received any invitation to take part in the dedication of any other buildings in Dutchess County?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I do not think so.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: Do you think you will be up here on Labor Day?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: Then may I tell Mr. Hassett now that I hope everybody will come to a picnic on Labor Day?

THE PRESIDENT: By the way, talking of illustrations of what I am saying about this rather precipitous decline this coming spring in work which the Government has helped through existing legislation, you have a very good illustration right here in the town of Hyde Park: The town of Hyde Park applied for grants to build these new schoolhouses to take care of the complete lack of accommodations and they are, all three, under construction at the present time.

By the way, later on -- they are not quite photographable yet because they are not more than fifteen feet above the ground, you might tell the photographers this: I think we will have a little trip after I do get back from the cruise or at the end of October to show you these three buildings because they are the first three buildings, so far as I know, around here that have been built of field stone. They will be different from the fifteen thousand other colonial brick schoolhouses that are being built all over the United States and, for a long time to come, we will have something that is different and classier than anybody else has got.

Now, on those three schoolhouses that are being built, 45%

with Federal money and 55% with bonds issued by the school district, there are 450 workmen at work. They will be all under roof this fall, late this fall. They will be all under roof and then, of course, once under roof, all the people working on the outdoor part of it will be discharged. There will be, during the course of the winter, a certain number of people employed, a decreasing number of people, in finishing up the interior, the plumbing and painting and flooring and things of that kind. But all three of them will be finished by late in the spring and then there won't be any of these 450 people at work on any public buildings, so far as I know, in this town. And I think the same thing applies to a certain extent to the new consolidated school in Red Hook, the new consolidated school down at Wappingers and the additions to the school in Arlington and certain other public works in the city of Poughkeepsie that have been done with W.P.A. funds.

So, you see, it is rather a practical question of human beings tied up with work, or, putting it the other way around, human beings who are not going to have this work after this coming spring. That is just a practical illustration and you can duplicate it in every other county in the United States.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: Give them the illustration of the precipice.

THE PRESIDENT: I was saying to the Missus at breakfast this morning that we have been carrying on now, for some time, at a fairly high level with three million people, workers, on relief rolls, plus probably, counting the people who get out the material for the job, another two million on P.W.A. That is about five million people at work one way or the other, and they have dependent on

them four times that number. That is a total of twenty million people who have been given work, not always steady, but some work.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: And some buying power.

THE PRESIDENT: And a great deal of buying power which affects the little grocer and every store on Main Street of Poughkeepsie, which is a good illustration -- every single store on Main Street, Poughkeepsie, and the two or three small stores in Hyde Park Village. It affects all the gasoline stations.

Now, coming next spring, there will be a cut down of from three to two million on W.P.A., and, on P.W.A., two million will have finished their work, so there are three million out of five million who will no longer be employed with any form of government assistance. The theory has been, on the part of the solid Republican minority, plus twenty to twenty-five per cent of the Democrats, that business would take up the slack as they lost their work, but it is a very serious condition, because it is not a gradually declining one over a period of years, but, rather, it is a precipice.

That is what the Missus was talking about. It is a precipice and it is always hard to get down a precipice without danger to life and limb, and then, going down, you have to slow up everything, even if you do get down safely to the bottom of the hill. The theory of the lending bill was to provide a transitional period, in other words, a graduated descent from the level of high employment to come down on a nice easy grade and let business pick up the slack as the country came down this nice easy grade. However, they have voted in favor of the precipice method.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: I always think you ought to tell them about -- you remember the old incline we used to run down with Uncle Ted at Oyster Bay? Because that is what happens.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. At Oyster Bay there was a sandy place that went from the higher level down to the beach and we children were awfully terrified because it was awfully steep and the sand went down with you and you were darned lucky if you did not end, half way down, by going down head over heels.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: Uncle Ted lined you up and you had to go at a run.

THE PRESIDENT: And go down this steep dune.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: And coming back you had to go up again and you slipped down two steps for every one you went up.

THE PRESIDENT: The other way around, one for every two, otherwise you would not get up.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: Yes, and you always had to climb.

THE PRESIDENT: It was a very difficult process, with real danger to life and limb. But the precipice illustration is a good one. It seems a little more dangerous to national prosperity than the gradual descent.

Q Mr. President, I understand that Lowell Thomas has sent your baseball team a challenge. Have you answered him at all?

THE PRESIDENT: I did not know they had. What does Captain Durno say?

Q (Mr. Durno) He did send us a challenge but I don't think we can accept. You are not going to be here next Sunday, are you?

THE PRESIDENT: I am going to be gone. I am leaving Saturday morning about ten o'clock.

Q He suggested, then, after you came back from --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) That is all right. Any time around Labor Day.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: Make it for that Sunday before Labor Day.

THE PRESIDENT: That would be all right. But what are we going to do about training?

Q (Mr. Belair) We are going to Campobello and train.

THE PRESIDENT: Entrain, you mean.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: You will have to do a lot of training. I wanted you in that Virginia Reel. (Laughter)

Q (Mr. Belair) If there was a chink in the woodwork, I would crawl right in. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: That is all right; you started off very bravely.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: I think, on the other hand, the nine old men would have to do a lot of training too.

THE PRESIDENT: We will have to get Johnny but I do not believe he will be back in time.

Q Can we get any other sons?

MRS. ROOSEVELT: Franklin, Jr., ought to be here because he is supposed to be working with John Mack.

Q (Mr. Durno) He is pretty good. We need somebody that can hit the ball.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you have got Tom Qualters here. He used to be on the Notre Dame football team. He ought to be able to do something.

Q (Mr. Durno) What football team?

THE PRESIDENT: I will give you a tip, off the record, if you will go up to Hyde Park and see the man who manages the Robin Hoods. They

are pretty good. Am I right?

MRS. ROOSEVELT: They have won lots of games this year.

THE PRESIDENT: I think you boys can take off the Robin Hoods on the Eagle News and the Star and Courier, just a nice temporary assignment. That puts them into the newspaper profession and I think we will win. That is a good team, that Robin Hood team. Did they beat Poughkeepsie the other day?

Q I think they did but I am not absolutely certain.

Q (Mr. Belair) Mr. President, do you leave from New York at the Brooklyn Navy Yard or from some other place?

THE PRESIDENT: No, it is down on the west side, at one of those piers.

Q That is on Saturday. When will it put you into Campobello?

THE PRESIDENT: What I think I will do, Felix (Belair), is to go on up the coast and get to Campobello on Monday. You see, you could not make it by Sunday.

Q We can fly.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, you could fly.

Q (Mr. Belair) We can make it by midnight Saturday night. You do not know how badly we want to get up there. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: You know, in Eastport they have a very good hotel.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: It is the best hotel.

THE PRESIDENT: Have you ever been in it?

Q I have heard all about it. Northeast Harbor isn't very far.

THE PRESIDENT: It is eighty miles.

Q We can tell the Coast Guard.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: If they are sensible, they can go on the Island (Campobello). There are people on the Island who take paying guests.

They will be a lot better off than in Eastport.

THE PRESIDENT: Darling, don't you think you are saying not very nice things about Eastport?

MRS. ROOSEVELT: It has not changed; it has never changed.

Q What are your plans?

THE PRESIDENT: My plans depend on fog. I think I will try to get in about eleven o'clock in the morning and have people off the shore to lunch or go to the cottage -- Franklin and Ethel are there -- and later in the afternoon I will go back on board and, if it is clear -- only if it is clear -- go out and leave that same afternoon but, if it is foggy, I won't leave until the next day. On those things you cannot tell. So, if I do go out late in the afternoon, you could still, that afternoon, take an automobile and go down to Bar Harbor Ferry and over to Northeast the same night.

Q If you should happen to see a lot of stray newspapermen wandering around, you could have them tossed into the sea.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that is right.

Q We must have atmosphere.

THE PRESIDENT: That is dead right. There is always a lot of color out there.

Q The Maine coast, they say, is a beautiful thing.

THE PRESIDENT: We need a little bit more lyrics in the news stories. Isn't that right, Dick?

MRS. ROOSEVELT: I think you ought to tell them that Ellsworth is the place to go to and take a car from there to Lubec, and not go to Eastport at all.

THE PRESIDENT: No, do not go to Eastport. Go to Ellsworth and take the car from there to Lubec.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: You will find a ferry which runs occasionally.

THE PRESIDENT: It is a scow with a little motor boat tied on the side of it. You go down this beach -- it is about a 45-degree angle on the Lubec side -- and it is just a great big incline with sliding pebbles. How any car goes down it, I do not know. You go down on the run and get aboard this scow and the little chug-chug soon starts and you are taken off 200 feet through an 8-knot current and, if the engine should ever stop, you would be in the middle of the Bay of Fundy. It is the darndest place you have ever seen; it is the Lubec Narrows.

Q (Mr. Durno) It is a very nice hotel; I can recommend it to him.

THE PRESIDENT: Now, who is going on the destroyer?

Q (Mr. Cornell) The three Press Associations.

Q (Mr. Durno) Doug Cornell and Tom Reynolds and I are.

THE PRESIDENT: She is one of the new ones, oneof the 1880's, so I think you will be very comfortable.

Q (Mr. Conway) Will you make any other stop?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not going ashore.

Q Any place where the other Press Correspondents could come?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not the faintest idea. Whenever I can, especially if it is rough or foggy, I will go into a harbor at night so that the people on the destroyer and myself will be out of the long roll. I prefer harbors at night, but which harbor it will be I have not the faintest idea, and how far north I will go I haven't the faintest idea.

Q Campobello will be the only one?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. There is only one possible contingency and that is off the record. I am thinking about you people. I think the Press Associations are all that is necessary. For instance, suppose I should go into Liverpool or Shelburne or Halifax? You cannot tell; I might be fogbound, but the Prime Minister of Nova Scotia or the Leftenant Governor of Nova Scotia might come out and say "Howdy?" They do not know I am coming but if I went into Louisburg or Sydney on Cape Breton Island, some officials, the Mayor -- that is a separate Province -- they might come aboard. If I stop into Newfoundland Harbor -- Newfoundland, as they call it up there, some potentate might come aboard, but I do not know where I am going.

Q Have you any seasick remedies you might recommend?

THE PRESIDENT: Get one of Pa's (General Watson's) plasters. You know that?

Q Do you recommend that?

THE PRESIDENT: I do, very much, because it saved their lives. You know that story?

We took the first cruise from San Francisco back through the Canal -- this is all off the record -- with Secretary Ickes and Pa (General Watson) and Harry Hopkins. It was their first cruise. Pa had gone to Abercrombie and Fitch and he had spent thousands of dollars in buying the latest fishing outfits recommended by Abercrombie and Fitch. They had cost four times the prices you can buy them at any other store. He had the darndest things. He had a fishing cap that had a darky's visor which was eight inches

long. He had said to the clerk, "Do you know of any remedies for seasickness?" The clerk said, with an English accent, "Oh, yes, sir. The very best thing we have is a plaster from London." And Pa bought the plaster and read the directions and, about the third day out, we were off the southern end of lower California and we struck the tail end of what they call a Tampico twister. It was a bit rough and Pa gave those to Ickes and Hopkins and they put, each of them, one of those plasters squarely on their abdomens and went to bed. Whether it was the bed or the plaster, they were not seasick. They remained safely in bed. Then we got down to the Cocos Islands where it was wonderfully smooth and warm and we went into shore to swim and they had these plasters on. It took them about six weeks to get them off. We used hoses and gasoline and kerosene and could not get them off. The last remains were off in about six weeks.

Q (Mr. Cornell) I think I will pass that up.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't think there will be any particular news tomorrow or the next day except these darned bills, when they begin to arrive. I am waiting here hopefully and patiently.

MR. BELAIR: Thank you. That is the first time I ever said it.

(Laughter)

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #571,
In the President's Study at Hyde Park, New York,
August 11, 1939, 11.00 A.M.

Q (Mr. Belair) Good morning, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. Well, Captain (addressing George Durno who is captain by consent of the baseball team, composed of members of the Press, et cetera, which annually plays Mr. Lowell Thomas' team at Pawling), how are you?

Q (Mr. Durno) Fair.

THE PRESIDENT: Here is a statement on the signing of the Social Security Act, which you can all have.

I will keep one copy for myself and you can have the rest. That is for immediate release. I do not want to delay it too much after the signing of the bill. That is easy; all you have to do is to write a two-line lead and put it on the wires.

Q You do not have any other news, do you, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I have except that I would be very grateful if you could make it clear somehow that the check I got yesterday, $600,000., does not go to Warm Springs at all, in any shape, manner or form. It has nothing to do with Warm Springs.

Q Where does that go?

THE PRESIDENT: National Infantile Paralysis Foundation.

MR. HASSETT: All of Tom Rigley's publicity emphasized that.

Q (Mr. Durno) I do not think any of the stories gave that impression, Mr. President.

Q (Mr. Belair) I think I might have done that.

THE PRESIDENT: Because there is all the difference in the world. You

see, the National Infantile Paralysis Foundation has nothing to do with Warm Springs. At the present time it is principally engaged on research into the causes of infantile paralysis. None of that money goes to Warm Springs. That (Warm Springs) is an aftercare thing. That is for after you have been bitten by the bug and it has acted on you.

Last year, for instance, the National Infantile Paralysis Foundation gave away grants to those different institutions, colleges and medical foundations and things like that. Then they gave an amount -- I have forgotten what the sum was -- to Tuskegee to set up a place there to care for colored children.

Q (Mr. Belair) It is an honest mistake that I made. The office told me they were handling the whole thing in New York and then, at the last minute, they came in for a separate story on the money.

THE PRESIDENT: This is all off the record. There is a most amazing ignorance about Warm Springs. They think that all this money has been going to Warm Springs. Well, it has not. Of course, actually the first year's money did go to Warm Springs and out of that money -- I have forgotten what it was -- $600,000. or $700,000. -- don't take these figures down because they are all cockeyed, because they are only approximations -- and that went into the new buildings. Then, we have been running Warm Springs at a loss every year of between $100,000. and $160,000. Those are just the plain, out-of-pocket losses because out of the average of one hundred people down there, there are about sixty full charity cases where the children do not have to pay one cent. So that the balance of the first year was used to pay off that net deficit of operating Warm

Springs.

Then, as I remember it, the following year the localities got 70% and Warm Springs got 30% and that 30% obtained in that year has been used since then to pay the deficit of operating Warm Springs.

Since then, in 1936 and 1937, it was divided 70% to the localities and 30%, those two years, to this committee on research, and that 30%, in 1936 and 1937, was given to the University of Southern California and the Harvard Infantile Paralysis Commission and, not the Rockefeller Institute, because that is like carrying coals to Newcastle, but to Yale Medical School, to Michigan and to one or two others.

Q There were about ten or twelve.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, ten or twelve. So Warm Springs got nothing in 1936 and 1937 and, in 1938, we started the Warm Springs National Foundation (National Infantile Paralysis Foundation?), which was the development of this research committee, and in 1938 30% went to them and in this past year 50% went to them. So none of this birthday money, since 1935, has gone to Warm Springs. We have been carrying this deficit for operating out of the 1934 and 1935 monies since then and it is damned near gone.

Q How about those last two buildings? They were contributed?

THE PRESIDENT: The education one was but not the big one.

Q Georgia Hall was, was it not?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q I thought there was a plaque in there?

THE PRESIDENT: No. On Georgia Hall, Columbus gave the colonnade out-

side and the rest of Georgia Hall was built about three-quarters with the contribution on the birthday from the State of Georgia.

Q I remembered a plaque in there with something about contributions.

THE PRESIDENT: As given by the citizens of Georgia. Well, it was part of that year's contribution and the other quarter -- they did not have enough -- came out of the contributions subscribed.

I do not think there is anything outside of that.

They say I have got all my bills here.

Q I notice in my statement here that you are glad that insurance benefits had been extended to cover additional employees. Do you mean by that the unemployment insurance benefits? That is down here in the fourth paragraph.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think so; I think you are right.

Q What did you think of the Connally Amendment, the two for one?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that really goes into the fact that this committee is looking into the thing. I will talk background, if you want, on this for a minute. Here is your problem: There are eight or ten states that are either paying nothing by way of old age pensions or are paying such ridiculously low old age pensions that they are out of line with all the rest of the country. Quite frankly, they are in the deep South. For instance, down at Warm Springs, after George (Durno) goes down there and locates in his old age, all he will get for his old age pension is $3. or $2. a month. I don't think George will be quite happy on $3. a month.

Q (Mr. Durno) I could live on the Marvin McIntyre Possum Preserve.

(Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: That is right, George. This is an effort on the part

of those states to have the Federal Government contribute instead of matching on a 50-50 basis. In other words, Georgia gives $5. and the Federal Government gives $5. But this is an effort to make the Federal Government give $10. if Georgia gives $5. The danger is that it is an opening and entering wedge for somebody to bring in an amendment next year that the Federal Government will pay the first $15. And then a year or two later we will have somebody with a happy thought that the Federal Government will pay the first $25. In other words, you will be federalizing the whole thing.

Of course the State of New York and the Middle Western States and the Far West, a great many of them are actually paying the $30. a month. A few are paying more because the Federal contribution is limited to $15. and a great many states are paying their $15. to get that and a few are paying more than $15. out of their own pockets.

Now, that raises the whole question of matching. If you apply it to that, why should not you apply it to education? Let us say the State of New York or the State of California would ask the Federal Government to match all their State needs for education. Also, it would raise immediately the question as to whether the Federal Government should give a larger sum, a larger percentage to the poorer states than to the richer states. And the same thing would apply to health.

This committee, that I speak about down here, is continuing -- it is not news -- is continuing the examination of that whole big subject. They are studying, first, the problem of straight match-

ing; secondly, the problem of lopsided matching, which is giving more to the poorer states than the richer states, and also the trend towards federalizing the whole thing and taking the burdens off the states. Well, of course, obviously the Federal Government cannot afford to do that unless, at the same time, it takes over certain state tax fields because otherwise it could not afford it and, if it does this sort of thing, it has got to find the money to do it with.

Q (Mr. Harkness) The Connally Amendment would have been a step, perhaps, towards the Townsend Plan?

THE PRESIDENT: No. No, the Connally Amendment would not have been a step towards the Townsend Plan but it would have been a step towards, first a differentiation between different states and, secondly, towards the Federal Government taking over the whole thing. But that does not mean the Townsend Plan.

You see, the first step of the Townsend Plan is the sales tax, the transaction tax.

Q (Mr. Harkness) It is for a Federal pension.

THE PRESIDENT: But the fact that this may work toward a Federal pension, the Connally thing, does not necessarily mean it would be financed that way. So I do not think you can say, fairly, that it is a step towards the Townsend Plan because you have another if in there. It is an if on top of an if.

Q (Mr. Belair) Some students of this problem believe that the Federal Government, in working out this program, will ultimately come to raising this money through direct Federal appropriations rather than payroll taxes.

THE PRESIDENT: There again you have an if upon an if because, whatever the Federal Government does, it has to find the money.

Q It is a question of where the tax burden should be levied?

THE PRESIDENT: That is it. It brings up the whole question as to who pays the tax. And, of course, the Federal Government now, for six years and a half, has been opposed to the theory of the sales tax as far as it can get away from it because it hits the poor fellows harder than people who can afford to pay more.

Q (Mr. Durno) Recently you got a letter from President Cardenas (of Mexico) which contained some new proposal for --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) It did not.

Q (Mr. Durno) I was just wondering if you care to talk about it.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think so because the thing is being handled in the State Department. Actually, in these negotiations, that is literally all you can say -- they are still talking.

Q Is it too early to attempt a definition of the man who?

THE PRESIDENT: The man who?

Q Looking to 1940?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q I mean not merely who but what kind of a fellow must this fellow be?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think I said, in simple words of one syllable, about all that can be said and it must be said merely in the words that were actually used.

I will give you an illustration: If I were to say, "Within the next half hour Felix (Mr. Belair) is going to drive to Poughkeepsie," it would not be fair if anybody were to think and say, "The President really meant that Felix was going to drive to Pough-

keepsie with a beautiful blonde."

Q It might have been. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Any more than it would be fair to say that Felix was going to drive to Poughkeepsie in an old coach-and-four.

Q With a brunette, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: With a brunette. (Laughter) In other words, the words I used were somewhat carefully chosen and it is a very, very plain English statement without any other interpretation to it. They were chosen so that they would speak for themselves and not say anything that was not in those words. I said words of one syllable. It is just as simple a statement as saying that Felix, in the next half hour, will probably drive to Poughkeepsie. It says nothing about his condition, says nothing about his companions, says nothing about his speed or the vehicles he travels in. I do not even have to say Felix; I can say Jones.

Q Mr. President, may I ask, in view of the fact that that bill was approved in Congress for making another Federal Court term in Poughkeepsie, between Albany and New York, whether that about suggests the possibility of using that old post office building for Federal building purposes?

THE PRESIDENT: I can give you a real local story on that. They are making a survey now in the Public Buildings and Grounds Division of the Interior Department as to all the Federal or quasi-Federal offices in Dutchess County with the idea, if there are enough of them, to put into the old post office building all offices of the Federal Government that are paying rent. I do not know enough about the details but there is the F.H.A. and the H.O.L.C. and the

P.W.A. and the Federal Court, et cetera and so on. You can work that up yourself. In other words, all the Federal agencies that are not now in the new post office building. If there are enough of them to warrant using the old post office building and thereby saving rent, it is an obvious measure of economy which would be helpful. We have not had any report yet and I do not suppose we will get one until I get back.

Q Your friend, Spratt (Mayor Spratt of Poughkeepsie), as Mayor, has had requests for space for different Federal offices and has not been able to fill them.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I think it is an advisable thing to do if we can use the old post office building and save that rent.

Q Would it be a temporary thing or indefinite?

THE PRESIDENT: Indefinite.

Q Apparently there has been no definite negotiation from Poughkeepsie to take it over, has there?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Is there anything to the story that you contemplate the appointment of Senator Smathers to the Federal Customs Court?

THE PRESIDENT: I think I have had, so far, 1200 applications for the two places.

MR. BELAIR: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Just one thing, also as background because the thing may come up while I am away: I noticed something from Washington this morning about calling Congress back in November. As far as I know, there is no reason at the present time for calling Congress back at this time -- what is today? August eleventh -- until they

begin the regular session on January third except that if an actual crisis of war became imminent -- I would use that language, not as a quote because I would rather have it used as background, but go ahead and use that language -- if a crisis of war became imminent.

Q That is a crisis of which war?

THE PRESIDENT: A crisis of war became imminent in Europe or the Far East. In other words, if it became reasonably certain that there was going to be a war, I would probably immediately call a special session in order to insure American neutrality along the lines of international law so that this country would not be involved.

Q Does that, sir, indicate you favor complete repeal of all neutrality statutes as they are now and a return to international law?

THE PRESIDENT: The same thing we were seeking before.

Q A repeal of the arms embargo?

THE PRESIDENT: In other words, going back to international law and making us neutral.

Q Would that, sir, give up cash and carry too?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, Dick (Mr. Harkness), there are a good many ways of doing that, so you cannot say, "Yes," and you cannot say, "No," to that.

Q There was, sir, a very definite cash and carry provision in the old law which expired and now --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Well, you can come close to doing a lot of things by executive action. Well, I will give you an illustration: Back in -- before the LUSITANIA was sunk -- Secretary of State Bryan begged the President to warn Americans to stay off

foreign flagships and that was one reason, because the President did not do it, one reason why Mr. Bryan resigned.

Now, there is undoubtedly authority in the President to warn Americans to keep off foreign flagships and if, in spite of that warning, they go on foreign flagships, the Government does not go to war with the nation whose submarine sinks the foreign flagship. In other words, they do it solely at their own risk.

I just used that one as an illustration. The Government can do a great many things without any law and if a fellow wants to go on a foreign flagship, the mere imposition of a fine on him or the threat of a fine is not going to keep him off.

In other words, we are all for the objective of cash and carry -- the objective of it. But there is a question as to whether it requires legislation or what type of legislation, if any.

Now, that is a rather minor point, that whole thing. I would not stress it very much. It is a very minor point. The big thing is the return to international law.

Q (Mr. Harkness) Congress made so much out of the cash and carry clause.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. The objective is perfectly all right.

Q Mr. President, does it still look like you will get to Campobello by the forenoon of Monday?

THE PRESIDENT: I think so. It depends a little bit on wind and weather. I think that is all right.

Q Are you going to have a Press Conference up there at Campobello, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I will tell you all about the cruiser. (Laughter)

Q You won't be coming ashore?

THE PRESIDENT: I may go ashore. I will have lunch with Franklin at the cottage. It is darned hard to get ashore, as George (Durno) knows, because I have to be literally carried in a chair about a hundred feet up the grass to get up to the house on a very winding and very rough path. But I think I will manage to get up to the house for lunch if it is a good day.

Q What time in the morning do you start out?

THE PRESIDENT: I am calling it ten o'clock. I will make it as close to ten as I can and pick you all up in Poughkeepsie, but I have got to talk to the State Department before I leave. I think there may be one or two other calls coming in. And then down in New York I am seeing at the pier -- has that been arranged?

MR. HASSETT: Yes, I have arranged that.

THE PRESIDENT: I mean the Mayor and Mr. Meaney of the State Federation of Labor. They are coming down there to wish me a happy trip.

Q What are his initials, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: George Meaney.

Q He is Chairman of the State Federation?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Any labor problems involved in his presence?

THE PRESIDENT: You never can tell.

Q I imagine that you couldn't. (Laughter)

Q Where will you get on the ship?

MR. HASSETT: Pier 32.

THE PRESIDENT: I would not put that in.

MR. BELAIR: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I hope that all your marks are good, not only those of you who are going on the destroyer but those of you who are going up to live in eastern Maine.

Q You mean in Eastport?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. George (Mr. Durno) wasn't there but it was something that happened the last time we were there.

Q I do not remember that.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, this is off the record, but away before prohibition, even before the World War, the Navy used to kick like a steer, in fact they issued an order that no more ships were to go into Eastport because the liquor was bad. It is literally true because Maine is dry. They had the damndest liquor.

I remember once, up the Coast, we ran out of liquor and I think we ran into Rockland and went shopping. We went up to the hotel and I leaned over the counter and said a few kind words to the clerk. I said, "Where can I get some gin?" He said, "Right in the drugstore, next door. Just give him this card." He said, "Talk to the old man at the rear of the drugstore."

I went to the drugstore and I said to the old man, "I want six bottles of gin," and he said, "Right." I said, "How much?" "Oh," he said, "do you want the best gin?" I said, "Sure." He said, "Ninety cents a bottle."

Well, gin was cheaper then than it is now, so he gave us the gin with nice labels, and I took it back on board and that evening we made ourselves a Martini and everybody said, "How," and "Down the hatch," and, well, we had to spit it out.

We found out afterwards that it was gin that was made out of the heads and tails of codfish. Did you ever hear of such a thing? It was fish gin. It was the most horrible thing I have ever tasted and I think it was about 210 proof.

Well, that was the sample of what you would get and up at Eastport they would give you straight denatured alcohol into which they had put a little brown sugar or something to color it up and it was the damndest thing.

Q (Mr. Durno) It is quite a town.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, quite a town.

Q (Mr. Belair) I think I will skip this trip and go back to Washington. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I will tell you, Dick (Harkness), you had better bring your own liquor with you.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #572,
Campobello Island, New Brunswick,
August 14, 1939.

THE PRESIDENT: (Speaking to newsmen embarked in LANG) The prettiest thing last night, about two in the morning, was when I looked out of my port and saw you under the searchlights. You were out ahead of us in a queer sort of a pinkish light, in the fog.

You boys can fire some questions.

Q We had quite a trip up here last night.

THE PRESIDENT: The road here was pretty good, wasn't it?

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: The only news that we had was stopping at the SQUALUS operations yesterday. We anchored last night, or early this morning, and stayed at anchor for about three or four hours.

Q Where was that, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: It was seven miles southwest of Machias Seal Island.

The easiest way to describe it is that it was about ten miles offshore from Machias Bay, which is a well-known bay, and then we passed under the cliffs of Grand Manan this morning. I don't think our three friends (referring to newsmen in LANG) were up then.

Q Have you been receiving any reports on the international situation?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, but nothing that was at all new.

Q Nothing to give you any concern?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, of course things are not always pleasant. One is bound to have concern, but I don't think there is much of a lead or a story in it, because it wasn't very different from what it has been in the past couple of weeks.

Q In what sense, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: In a sense of imminence, not eminence, but imminence.

Q Mr. President, in view of your message to the Young Democrats' League, are you pleased with their general response?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think there is anything to be added to that famous message. The horrible example I cited at Hyde Park of Felix going to Poughkeepsie, or was it George, with the blonde?

Q That was a million dollars worth of publicity for me.

THE PRESIDENT: For you or the blonde?

Q For me.

Q Have you any comment to make on Mayor Kelly's address to the Young Democrats? It was in the Sunday morning papers. Mayor Kelly addressed the Young Democrats the closing night.

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't seen anything of that.

Q I have the story.

THE PRESIDENT: I will take it back and read it on board. That's fine.

Q I think you had better read it now. (Hands the President a press clipping).

THE PRESIDENT: Old Jim Haggerty. I haven't seen old Jim for a long time. How is Jim, Felix? Well, I hope?

Q Yes, sir. I saw him at the Governors' Conference when they came down to Hyde Park for lunch.

THE PRESIDENT: The answer is, Thank you very much for letting me see the Sunday paper.

Q Do you have any comment on that? Mayor Kelly says the Young Democrats are waiting for your answer. Mr. President, could you comment on your statement to the Young Democrats in this way -- your

stand toward the Presidential candidate -- may that be construed as applying also down the line through the Senate, House, etc.?

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't say anything about them, did I? I can't enlarge on those simple English words -- words of one syllable, weren't they?

Q If you knew how much thought went into the preparation of that question I think you would make a statement.

THE PRESIDENT: There wasn't as much thought went into that as into the preparation of the letter.

Q Do you think you will stop at Halifax?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we will drop in to Halifax. It depends entirely on fog going around Cape Sable, and you know that's a pretty foggy spot.

Q When will you stop?

THE PRESIDENT: If we do get around it tonight, all right, we will get to Halifax tomorrow.

Q Do you suppose you will go ashore then, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I will not go ashore anywhere. I might just run in to Halifax for mail and papers. If I don't do that I will go in to Sidney or Louisburg at Cape Breton.

Q Maybe we could drop out and see you.

THE PRESIDENT: You know Halifax is an awful place to get to. By train you have to go to St. John and you know how hard it is to go to St. John from here. From St. John you have to get a steamer across to Digby, and then to Halifax. It will take at least twenty-four hours.

Q From Halifax are you going up around Newfoundland?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. It depends entirely on the weather. If it is perfectly clear, I will go up as far as the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Labrador Coast, and it if isn't clear, I may run around the southern part of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Prince Edward Island, Cape Breton Island and then southern Newfoundland. It is all perfectly vague. I have no idea myself. You saw from last night what the weather can do to you. We are not in a small pilot boat the way you were. With a ten thousand ton cruiser, I am pretty careful of it. I don't want her to bump. When you are in a small pilot boat, it doesn't make so much difference.

Q Have you decided what time you are going to take off?

THE PRESIDENT: About five o'clock or a quarter past. I am having all of the old neighbors out to tea on board, first.

Q How many?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose there will be about twenty of them.

Q Captain Johnson of the LANG is coming aboard?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q We still need a headline, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't got a thing. I am sending our Chief Boatswain's Mate down to get some very long, deep-sea, heavy lead hand lines in case we get somewhere offshore on one of those fishing banks.

Q Not much sport in it, is there?

THE PRESIDENT: Food, food! Great food value!

Q Mr. President, when you say there is no imminence of a crisis do you regard the situation as it generally has been in the past?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Just the same as it has been for the last two

weeks. And, of course, as you know, it is a little bit worse than it was for a month or two before that.

Gosh! I wish I could think of something.

Q I thought you would have a swell story right in the back of your head to give us up here.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh! I will give you a story I had entirely forgotten. I have been having from a great many people for the last six years, complaints that Thanksgiving Day came too close to Christmas. Now this sounds silly. In other words, between Labor Day, which is generally observed, and Christmas, there is too long a gap up to Thanksgiving Day when it comes at the very end of November, and there is a great long gap even for those states that celebrate the twelfth of October, Columbus Day. The stores and people who work, retail people, etc., are very anxious to have it set forward and I checked up and it seems to be the only holiday which is not provided for by law, nationally, even though it may be in a small number of states. In most states it is a Governor's Proclamation. This year, because Thanksgiving Day is the thirtieth of November, (I had better check on that), I am going to step it up a whole week and make it not the last Thursday but the Thursday before the last Thursday in November.

Q This year, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: This year, yes. And on the history of it, it has been held at various times. In the early days of the Republic it was held sometime in October, being a perfectly movable feast, and it was not set as the last Thursday in November until after the Civil War, so there is nothing sacred about it, and as there seems to

be so much desire to have it come a little earlier, I am going to step it up one week.

Q Did you have anything to say to Mayor La Guardia?

THE PRESIDENT: No, just a nice talk.

Q Have you any more hope for peace in the labor dispute between CIO and AFL?

THE PRESIDENT: No change.

Q In the event we have to use Navy radio, will you please expedite this one?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I did all right with them yesterday except that I had to delete one sentence. They had me attending Divine Services and there was no chaplain on board. They wanted to know why Pa hadn't preached the sermon. We radioed back that I wouldn't let him.

Q That would have been worth the price of admission, wouldn't it?

THE PRESIDENT: The whole crew would have attended. You are going to see some lovely scenery if we get up to those parts.

Q So far, so good.

Q You didn't hear a sharp gong about three a.m. Sunday morning? They thought it was a fire alarm when my head struck a bunk.

THE PRESIDENT: Have you got any fishing lines on board? You ought to get plenty of cod and maybe some haddock, and they are darn good. You are Down East, you know. Have them make some codfish cakes and chowder.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #573,
Executive Offices of the White House,
August 25, 1939, 10.35 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Be careful of your facial expressions this morning.

You are being photographed. (A still photographer and a movie photographer were taking pictures of the Press Conference, this Press Conference being the first since the beginning of the new crisis in Europe.)

Q (Mr. Godwin) Where?

THE PRESIDENT: You must look serious. That is perfect. (Speaking to Mr. Belair) You should not laugh.

What is everybody coming in for this morning?

Q We have a big crowd.

(It was announced that all of the Press were in the room.)

THE PRESIDENT: I literally have no news this morning. You all know the gravity of the situation. There has been no answer as yet from any of the European countries to the messages that were sent yesterday. I do not think there is anything else.

Q Mr. President, do you have any comment on Senator Borah's sources of information? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think the implications that have been made on the air by one or two of my friends were, perhaps, justified.

Q Mr. President, do you have any comment on Congressman Fish's activities?

THE PRESIDENT: No. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) That soft snicker (laughter), that comes

from the Press. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, is it too early to have given any thought to the possible cancellation of your western trip?

THE PRESIDENT: No, Russ (Mr. Young), I do not think so yet. It is just one of those things -- not making any plans ahead, absolutely none. I have not canceled anything and I have not made any more dates.

Q Does the trip stand, or until further notice?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and just the same way with the trip going to Hyde Park on Monday night. That stands subject to further notice.

Q Will the new crisis increase our armament program, specifically the New England air base?

THE PRESIDENT: Not as of today, no.

Q Mr. President, do you plan a special session of Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I think I made that perfectly clear. Perhaps there was a little confusion on the word "imminent." I always think that imminent carries with it the connotation of certainty and I would not regard the present situation as certain to result in war. There is not much more to be said about calling Congress. I think we all very devoutly hope that war is not certain.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Mr. President, there are certain things I should not ask you but I am going to ask you if you have that devout hope based on any knowledge?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing more than you have and we all have. In other words, quite frankly, you all know just as much about the situation as I do.

Q Mr. President, could you tell us something about the efforts being

made to take care of the effects of war on the United States?

THE PRESIDENT: Of course there isn't really much that is new on that. We have all, ever since early September of 1938, we have all been thinking of the steps to be taken in the event that actual war broke out. There has been certain machinery which has been prepared, such as on the financial needs, the bringing back of Americans from war zones and things of that kind. That machinery has been pretty well protected during the past year and it is a question of its use -- pressing the button at the appropriate time. Almost every department of the Government is concerned with that and probably most of the people I will see today from the departments, that I talk to, will refer to the use of that machinery if it becomes necessary.

Q Mr. President, do you have any Latin American mediator (referring to the President's messages to Poland and Germany) in mind?

THE PRESIDENT: No, nobody in mind.

Q Mr. President, so far as the cushioning machinery is concerned, would you say that it was at its maximum efficiency now to operate immediately, so far as you know?

THE PRESIDENT: I would not say maximum. I would say better than it has been at any time in the past. Nothing is ever perfect.

Q Mr. President, have you received the resignation or retirement of Judge Morton of the First Circuit Court?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think so. Have we?

Q Do you anticipate it, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of. Judge Morton?

Q Judge Morton.

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Were copies of your message sent to the Latin American countries?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of.

Q Do you expect to go back to Hyde Park, sir, any time soon?

THE PRESIDENT: Not if the general world situation remains next Monday as it is today.

Q Otherwise, you go up about next Monday night?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I say, if it is as it is today next Monday I will stay here.

Q What has got to happen over there, Mr. President, before you call a special session? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I can go over it again. I tried to make it clear. And, after all, that is, at the present time, as of today's news, a rather minor factor in the world news. There are other things more important today.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Mr. President, would you like to have the minutes of this meeting contain our "Happy Birthday" wishes for Mr. Early on Sunday?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that is a very, very excellent suggestion. And to have reached the half century mark! Do you remember when we reached the half century mark. There is one thing we can tell him: We feel younger today than we did then, so that is at least --

Q (Mr. Godwin) (interposing) You may! (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I am just holding a little hope out to him. It is always darkest just before the dawn. (Laughter) I think the fifties are pretty good, don't you?

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #574,
Executive Offices of the White House,
August 29, 1939, 4.15 P.M.

Q (Mr. Godwin) No stamps.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q (Mr. Godwin) I was looking at some stamps that day that they took the picture and everybody in the United States thinks I was looking at your mail. (Laughter)

Q That is just a guilty conscience.

THE PRESIDENT: No, there was only one fellow that ever did that and he is gone.

Q There are no stamps there showing in the picture (indicating picture).

THE PRESIDENT: (addressing Mr. Godwin) I did not hear you this morning. I overslept and did not wake up until a quarter to nine. Were you good?

Q (Mr. Godwin) I will tell you how good I was: I got an idea off you. You dictated it this morning.

THE PRESIDENT: Good.

(It was indicated that all of the Press were in the room.)

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think I have any special news.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Are you aware of what is going on with the BREMEN?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes.

Q Do you care to say anything about it?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I heard -- do not mention it because this brings in an old friend of ours -- I heard Al Warner on the radio a little while ago --

Q (interposing) He is right here.

THE PRESIDENT: I heard Al talking about privateers. Of course there ain't no such thing as privateers. There hasn't been for a great many years. A ship today is no longer commissioned by what they called Letters of Marque by governors and there is nothing particularly strange about the NORMANDIE or the BREMEN except to suggest that you link the two names together and you can add the De GRASSE and you can add the NEW YORK that went out yesterday. They are all in exactly the same category. Of course it is perfectly obvious that a government has to protect itself against possible future claims. Once upon a time there was a ship called the ALABAMA that was fitted out in England without guns but met on the high seas a ship with guns and she was duly armed and became a vessel of war of the Confederate States of America, which sank a great many of the Union ships. I think we collected about $15,000,000. from England for having let her go out, her and the SHENANDOAH and one or two others.

Of course, on this particular thing there is or would be a potential liability on the part of the United States if we allowed any ship of any nation to leave here and become armed or arm itself on the high seas for offensive purposes, and therefore these ships are being searched for information as to whether or not they have the possibility of arming themselves on the high seas.

Q Your picture --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) That is about all. It does not apply to the BREMEN only, it applies to the NORMANDIE and the De GRASSE and the NEW YORK and probably any other ship that comes in. It

is a matter of precaution to save this Government from potential future liability. I do not think there is anything very exciting. We know that it did occur during the World War.

Q The Treasury information is if that ship is likely to become -- I do not know if they used the word "privateer" --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) There is no such thing as a privateer. A raider, a Government raider, such as the NORMANDIE or De GRASSE or any other ship.

Q The information I have is that if they suspect that or have some reason to believe it, that the decision on it is up to you?

THE PRESIDENT: All I want to know is whether she is carrying guns or not.

At the same time, if it is perfectly obvious that a ship is pursuing a trading voyage and is carrying purely defensive armaments against enemy warships or submarines or otherwise, we allow them into our ports, in and out of our ports, but it has got to be proved that they are purely defensive armaments of a trading vessel.

See how perfectly simple it is, if explained.

Q The ALABAMA case was liability due to the fact that the other ship, which supplied the ALABAMA with guns, had sailed from England?

THE PRESIDENT: As I remember it, the other ship was a British ship too but had been obviously built for war purposes by the Camalier Yard in Liverpool.

Q What was the World War incident, can you tell us that?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not remember the names of the ships, but there was an action fought -- maybe Dan (Captain Callaghan) can remember

it -- there was an action fought down somewhere near, I think it was the Cape Verde Islands, between a British -- either a cruiser or a merchant ship which had been armed for war purposes, not for merchant purposes, and a German merchant ship which had been armed and sent out as a raider. In other words, certain types of merchant ships were used during the World War. They were what might be called quasi cruisers. They were war ships.

Q This Government, then, is establishing such a policy in the event of a further crisis for any vessels of that class?

THE PRESIDENT: Any vessels, any nation.

Q All nations?

THE PRESIDENT: Any nation that is potentially a belligerent nation.

Q Was the interning of German submarines under the same authority?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Was the interning of German submarines under the same authority?

THE PRESIDENT: No, that is a little bit different case because a submarine is a vessel of war.

Q Does the policy apply on the Pacific as well as the Atlantic?

THE PRESIDENT: Anywhere.

Q Did you take the initiative in this case?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. The thing has been talked about for several years. I do not know who started it.

Q Mr. President, what is the outcome of the search of the BREMEN?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. I do not know if it is finished.

Q Can you tell us anything about the removal of the seventeen passengers.

THE PRESIDENT: No, that is purely an immigration question. I do not

know. I have no information.

Q Mr. President, there is some movement on foot to invite the President of Argentina to come up here on some kind of a visit?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing on it at the present time.

Q In a speech last week, Assistant Secretary of Commerce (Assistant Secretary of War?) Johnson suggested that the present crisis might not have occurred if Congress had approved your neutrality suggestion. I wonder if you have anything on that line?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that is a sort of "iffy" question but, on the other hand, there are of course a great many people who do feel that the decision of the solid Republican minority in the Senate plus a minority of the Democratic membership was a contributing factor, of which notice undoubtedly was taken in all the capitals of the world. I say "contributing factor" because the opinion ran from those who say it was a major factor to those who say it was a minor factor, but I think everybody says that it was a factor.

Q What do you say?

THE PRESIDENT: I say it was a factor, a contributing factor. There is no escape from that because that is a well-known fact in every capital of the world.

Q Have you received any indication from those in the Senate who voted against the consideration of the neutrality revision --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No.

Q -- that they would vote differently?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, can we get away from the war for a moment? Did you discuss the anti-trust situation with Will Hays yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Did not get around to that?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, have you sent a message to Governor Horner of Illinois, asking a special session of the Illinois Legislature on oil?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I sent a letter to Governor Horner and a copy of the letter to the Lieutenant Governor on the oil problem but I did not actually ask him to call his legislature. That would be exclusively up to him. I had a reply that came in yesterday and I sent it over to the Interior Department for notation and preparation of a reply if one is necessary. I do not think we would give them out here. I think that should come out in Springfield. No reason it should not be published as far as I am concerned.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #575,
Executive Offices of the White House,
September 1, 1939, 10.40 A.M.

(The Secretary of State, Mr. Hull, was present, also Mr. and Mrs. John Roosevelt.)

THE PRESIDENT: (Addressing Earl Godwin) What time did you get up?

Q (Mr. Godwin) About 3.00 or 3.15, right after you aroused the Nation. Felt like I belonged to the village fire department.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes; you were not the only one.

Q (Mr. Godwin) I know it. I wonder if anybody got Borah up.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Where is he?

Q He went to Poland Springs, Maine. (Inaudible)

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Poland Springs, Maine.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I thought you said Poland. That would have been news.

(It was announced that the Press were all in.)

THE PRESIDENT: I think a good many of us had a somewhat sleepless night. Bill Hassett has told you of what happened at the White House and State Department, beginning at 2.50 A.M. I think that a word of praise should be said for our Diplomatic Service because, without much question, we were advised of the beginning of the invasion here in Washington as early as any other outside nation. Ambassador Biddle got through by telephone to Bullitt about 2.35 our time and it was a very poor connection and it is a question as to whether any further telephoning is possible between Paris and Warsaw -- that we don't know -- and Bullitt began getting

through to us at 2.40 and actually did get through at 2.50. As Bill, I think, has told you, the first thing I did was, of course, to call up the Secretary of State and the Under Secretary and the Secretaries of War and Navy and then Bill (Mr. Hassett) got through to the Press Associations within about a minute after that -- I do not think he even stopped to dress -- and was on the radio within another minute and a half after that.

I do not believe at this particular time of this very critical period in the world's history that there is anything which I can say except to ask for full cooperation of the Press throughout the country in sticking as closely as possible to facts. Of course that will be the best thing for our own Nation and, I think, for civilization.

There is nothing that can be said at the present time on some of the things that they, in what almost might be called "local terms," would be asked about. I would say local for the present time would be such questions as, when Congress will be called, the question of a neutrality proclamation. All of those things must await developments, obviously. Things are happening on the other side today, and probably will tomorrow, which will be important factors in the consideration of these other things, I would say American action.

I hope particularly that there won't be unsubstantiated rumors put out, whether they originate here or elsewhere, without checking. It is a very simple thing to check either with the State Department or any other department concerned or with the White House. I will cite a very simple example: The Secretary

of State called me up about fifteen minutes ago, before I came over here, and said there was a report out -- I do not know whether it was printed or not, but if it was printed it would be a pity -- that we had sent out a general order for all American merchant ships to return to American ports. Now, that kind of a thing is confusing to the public mind and what I hope is that the American public will stick pretty closely to facts. I think they will and, in the long run, they will get the facts anyway. As you know, I believe pretty strongly in the commonsense American opinion as a whole -- the mass opinion.

I do not think there is anything else I can tell you about that you do not know already. If you want to ask any questions that can be asked about at this time, it is perfectly all right.

Q (Mr. Phelps Adams) I think probably what is uppermost in the minds of all the American people today is, "Can we stay out?" Would you like to make any comment at this time on that situation?

THE PRESIDENT: Only this, that I not only sincerely hope so but I believe we can and that every effort will be made by the Administration so to do.

Q May we make that a direct quote?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q May we have it again?

(The stenographer read the President's statement, to wit, "Only this, that I not only sincerely hope so but I believe we can and that every effort will be made by the Administration so to do.")

Q Mr. President, I suppose it is somewhat a matter of routine to ask if you have anything to say about Secretary Hull's visit with you

before the Conference?

THE PRESIDENT: Just this usual batch of dispatches and they are coming in now at the rate of one every ten minutes -- in fact, they are coming in at the rate of one every five minutes.

Q From all over?

THE PRESIDENT: All over.

Q Mr. President, are you considering any changes in the Bloom neutrality law?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not considered anything in the last few hours. That follows what I said before.

Q Did you see Ambassador Wilson?

THE PRESIDENT: Ambassador Wilson presented his resignation as Ambassador to Germany and it was accepted and he has been assigned to special duty in the State Department.

Q Presented today?

THE PRESIDENT: Today, yes.

Q Has anyone been named to fill that place?

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot answer questions like that.

Q Mr. President, would you indicate what those duties are that he was assigned to?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know; I do not think we are ready to announce that yet.

Q Mr. President, did you say a while ago <u>when</u> Congress is called or <u>whether</u> Congress is called?

THE PRESIDENT: I said, "When."

Q Will you say whether that means definitely Congress will be called, Mr. President? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it means between September first and January second.

Q (Mr. Godwin) That's right.

THE PRESIDENT: There you are; you asked for it. (Laughter)

MR. GODWIN: I will say, "Thank you, Mr. President," if the rest of the gentlemen are willing to agree.

THE PRESIDENT: I really cannot give you anything more.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #576,
Executive Offices of the White House,
September 5, 1939, 4.10 P.M.

THE PRESIDENT: How is everybody?

Q (Mr. Belair) We have got a visitor to the front row today. (Indicating Mr. George Durno whose custom it has been to stand in the back row so that he may more quickly get to the telephone)

Q (Mr. Durno) I thought I would hear a little better.

Q I met a friend of yours from Georgia, Mr. Irwin.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes; a nice fellow. (To Earl Godwin who had quite a collection of pencils) What do you use, the old-fashioned broad lead?

Q (Mr. Godwin) I generally use this. (Indicating a heavy lead pencil)

THE PRESIDENT: There are a lot of people coming in.

Q (Mr. Godwin) The biggest gate we have had for a long time.

THE PRESIDENT: Is it?

Q (Mr. Godwin) Yes, tremendous.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: You have been told about the regular Proclamation of Neutrality this morning and, at the close of this Conference, the Secretary of State and the others are coming in and we are going to act on the second Proclamation, which is to carry the so-called Neutrality Act into effect. Outside of that I don't think I have anything in particular.

Q Well, sir, as a matter of convenience to the working men, when you say you have to act on it is that all you have to do or will you

have to discuss something which will take up some time?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think so. We have read it over once this morning and I suppose, before the final signature, we will read it over again, just so as to check up on the thing finally.

Q Mr. President, will that be given out here or at the State Department?

THE PRESIDENT: At the State Department, I think. The other was, was it not?

Q Yes, sir.

Q Have you got anything to say, sir, about the Proclamation which has already been issued? Anything further than what is now --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I do not think so. Of course it is in the regular form of historic neutrality proclamations. A good deal of it, most of it, of course, relates to vessels of belligerents in American waters.

Q Mr. President, is there anything you can yet tell us about a special session?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not yet.

Q In your first Proclamation you mentioned, several times, "territorial waters." Have we any definition of territorial waters?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know.

Q Again, there has always been a discussion of what constitutes territorial waters. I wonder if there is a definite limit --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) That I could not tell you because, frankly, I do not know enough about it to define it.

Q Mr. President, you spoke of this as being the regular form of such proclamations. I was wondering whether the words, "without inter-

fering with the free expression of opinion and sympathy," is not a deviation from the usual form?

THE PRESIDENT: That I do not know; you had better ask the State Department.

Q I was wondering whether that was emphasizing the point you made the other night that you could not ask the people to be neutral in thought as well as action?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know whether it has been in before but it is pretty good emphasis. It may be historic, but I do not know.

(The question was asked as to why the President used the word "so-called" with respect to the Neutrality Act.)

Well, you know the Secretary of State and I have called it that for a good many months. There is nothing new in that. The Secretary always called it that, and I have, consistently.

Q Anything you can say on profiteering?

THE PRESIDENT: No, except that the Department of Justice, as you know, is studying the subject.

Q Has any decision been made to send vessels to convoy American liners returning Americans to this country from Europe?

THE PRESIDENT: No. The concensus of opinion has been, both from the other side and here -- from the American Embassy in London and here -- that it is probably safer for American flag ships, with their flags painted on the sides and painted on their decks and superstructures, to run on the normal, usual course, without zig-zagging and without darkening ship, so that the whole thing is absolutely out in the open. Furthermore, there is nothing secret about the times of their sailing so that, obviously, with the

slightest care in the world, there can be no mistaking them for vessels belonging to any of the belligerents. That is believed to be the safest way for them to come over.

Q Have you received protests from Boston about the sailing of a certain American ship alleged to be carrying gun cotton and aviation gasoline to Germany?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q There is a dispatch from Boston --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) There is a German ship which went into Boston last night.

Q This is an American flag ship.

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q About the Americans returning on ships belonging to belligerents, such as the ATHENIA, will you safeguard them --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) There again, as you know, under international law, they can do so because, under international law, supplemented by the 1930 Convention, which was adhered to by Germany in 1936, any merchant ship is supposed to be stopped and full opportunity given to the passengers to be rescued in safety before such a ship is sunk. That is international law.

Under the present Neutrality Act, Americans are given ninety days to return to their own country on ships of belligerents, so long as that seems to be the only way for them to return, and there is no penalty attached to their going back in belligerent ships. The Embassies in London and Paris, both Ambassadors, have been advised of these two facts and, at the same time, they have been told to tell the Americans that, of course, in going in

belligerent ships there seems to be no question, especially in view of the ATHENIA sinking, that they are taking a greater risk than if they came in an American flag ship or a neutral ship.

Q Has the Government decided to set up a system of convoys for passenger ships, our own ships?

THE PRESIDENT: I answered that, Fred (Mr. Essary).

Q (Mr. Essary) I beg pardon.

THE PRESIDENT: That, by general agreement, both in the Embassies in London and Paris and the State Department, it seems to be safer for American flag ships to come back with all their lights burning and the American flags painted all over them, on a regular schedule and regular, normal course.

Q Rather than with a convoy?

THE PRESIDENT: Rather than with a convoy.

Q Mr. President, from a mechanical standpoint, can you tell us what you consider the minimum notice that would be necessary in the event of a special session of Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I do not know; I haven't got to that yet.

Q Why do you arrive at the conclusion that it is safer to come without a convoy? I would be very glad to hear what you have to say about that.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, because any warship looks like a warship and is probably more likely to be attacked than a brightly lighted passenger ship, which is not zigzagging and is going through regular routes of commerce.

Q Mr. President, is there anything new you can say on the question as to whether Congress will be called?

THE PRESIDENT: I simply haven't any more news on that than I had at the last Conference.

At the present time I am working on certain matters which can be done probably without legislation, probably should be done even before Congress can meet, matters relating to stricter and more careful enforcement of neutrality in this country and matters relating to ordinary filling out of certain gaps in our own national defense.

In the latter case, for example, as you know, the Navy is not even on a peacetime basis. It is fifteen per cent of personnel short of being on a peacetime basis. We only have eighty-five per cent of the regular crews on our Navy ships and probably that fifteen per cent, as a matter of ordinary national defense precaution, should be made up. At the same time, we have certain immediate problems of patrolling our own waters and, in order to do that, it seems advisable to put into commission an idle type of ship, of which we have a good many that are out of commission, the World War type of destroyer. Well, it means providing crews for those ships. As an illustration, on the Army needs, we probably need additional men in the Canal Zone and Puerto Rico.

And, on the neutrality end, it seems rather important to take additional precautions against -- what shall I say? -- propaganda in this country that is aimed at our system of government, propaganda in favor of communism or dictatorships, things of that kind and furthermore, to take precautions against the use of this country as a center or centers of information-gathering that might help any of the belligerents. Those things are being worked on

and probably certain steps ought to be taken in the course of the next few days along those very, very simple lines. What action is necessary I do not know quite yet.

Q You said communism. Did you follow that with any other --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Dictatorships. Systems of government that are contrary to ours.

Q Does the increase in the Army and Navy involve an appropriation problem?

THE PRESIDENT: Not at this time, no. As far as the appropriations go, it would not be necessary to get any appropriations probably until the regular session.

Q How about the northeastern area base for which money was appropriated at the last session?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know.

Q There has been some discussion as to whether the Neutrality Act would invalidate contracts that other countries have placed in this country for airplanes and other equipment. Have you gone into that?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I do not know.

Q Do you know whether the contracts would be carried out?

THE PRESIDENT: I believe that is a matter between the contracting parties.

Q Has there been any designation of how much shipment of supplies to the belligerents may be held up by the application of the embargo?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know; I have not heard.

Q Does this Government continue to regard Canada as a non-belligerent in view of the delay?

THE PRESIDENT: Has the State Department said anything about that?

Q I do not think so.

THE PRESIDENT: The fact is a very simple one that both South Africa -- well, in South Africa the matter is up for action before the Parliament of South Africa at the present time and, in the case of Canada, the Parliament has been called for whatever action is desired to take on Thursday and that is all there is.

Q Do you think, sir, that we have, already,, enough law on the subject of the spread of propaganda for these various systems of government?

THE PRESIDENT: Probably.

Q You spoke here of doing things that would not require legislation so I imagine --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Frankly, the more I have looked into this the less it seems likely that there is need for any legislation except what we have all talked about so long and that is neutrality and one or two very minor matters that really go along hand in hand with it.

Q You mean that can be handled by Executive Order or Proclamation?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes; something like that.

Q I was going to ask you if it would simply require stricter enforcement of existing law?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, or, as Felix (Mr. Belair) said, laws (Orders?) or Proclamations.

Q Would you care to tell us a little more about what those details are that go hand in hand with it?

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot because we are in the middle of examining it.

I do not know.

Q What anti-profiteering laws do we now have on the statute books, do you know?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know enough about it.

Q Murphy (the Attorney General) said it was inadequate. I wondered what it was, outside of the tax laws.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know.

Q Is it your information which says that it was a submarine which sunk the ATHENIA?

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot tell you yet because we have not had a report from the Embassy in London. We have had various statements from the passengers but I think probably those same statements from passengers have been given to the press and we have not had anything official or final from the Embassy.

Q Do you await the American Embassy at London for that?

THE PRESIDENT: London and Ireland.

Q Cudahy was down there.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and the Embassy, in London, has sent one of the Naval staff over there.

Q Mr. President, is there any curtailment of that ninety-day period on belligerent ships, in view of the invocation of the Neutrality Act?

THE PRESIDENT: No, it is ninety days. It follows the actual wording of the law.

Q May we revert to this airplane question for a moment? You said it would depend on the terms of the contract between the contracting parties. Would that be the American manufacturers and the French

and English Governments, or the American Government and the French and English Governments?

THE PRESIDENT: No, because the contracts are between the manufacturers and the French and English Governments.

Q How then could a contract entered into by an American company with the English and French be affected as to whether he can ship airplanes?

THE PRESIDENT: Because if his Government has a law which says he cannot do it, as the Neutrality Act says, he is bound by the law.

Q Then the effect of the Neutrality Act would be to cancel all uncompleted parts of the contract?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q No dispute about that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. As to what those contracts contain as to the payment of unrealized profits is a matter between the parties.

Q Most of those with the Los Angeles manufacturers provide some sort of indemnity.

THE PRESIDENT: That is a thing in which this Government has no part.

Q That does not depend on the Neutrality Act?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

MR. EARLY: There was a previous question. I do not think you heard it clearly.

THE PRESIDENT: What was the previous question?

Q I asked if the Proclamation would invalidate the unfilled portion of the contract?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes and no. It depends on the contract. Don't you see?

Q Yes, I understand.

THE PRESIDENT: In other words, suppose the manufacturer and the British Government make a straight contract to deliver planes. Now, legally, it is perfectly possible that the British Government may sue for damages because the planes have not been delivered. That is possible although, of course, they would never get any. What escape clauses they may have I haven't the faintest idea.

Q Most of them have escape clauses.

THE PRESIDENT: The fact is that the Neutrality Proclamation supersedes any and all contractual obligations.

Q That answers the question as to whether there are any loopholes or subterfuges? This cuts it right off?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #577,
Executive Offices of the White House,
September 8, 1939, 10.50 A.M.

Q Good morning, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Are you all ready? (Referring to the trip to Hyde Park)

Q Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning, Earl (Mr. Godwin)

Q (Mr. Godwin) How do you do, sir. You know the Carpenter that painted the Carpenter picture over there, the Lincoln picture? The bookseller gave me a book, "Inner Life of Lincoln -- Six Months at the White House," written by this artist.

THE PRESIDENT: I had heard of it.

Q (Mr. Godwin) I will give it to Missy. There is some interesting stuff in it.

THE PRESIDENT: Did he actually live at the White House for six months?

Q (Mr. Godwin) I have not read enough to know; but it is known that he was in there from day to day.

THE PRESIDENT: The modern artists get about five minutes; that is all they are allowed.

Q You would not board and feed an artist for six months? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Who took my copy of the Proclamation? Frank Murphy has it. Frank (addressing the Attorney General), did you steal my carbon copy, the last one I had, of the Proclamation?

MR. EARLY: Did you pick it up with the other papers, Frank?

ATTORNEY GENERAL MURPHY: No, I did not.

MR. EARLY: Are you sure; have you looked?

THE PRESIDENT: You will have to telephone to the State Department to send it over on the run. Steve, I will bet that you took it.

MR. EARLY: Did you tear up a big brown envelope?

(The President picked an envelope out of his wastebasket but it did not contain a copy of the Proclamation.)

ATTORNEY GENERAL MURPHY: I think Berle (Mr. A. A. Berle, Assistant Secretary of State) has it.

MR. EARLY: I think Berle left it (meaning with Mr. Latta).

THE PRESIDENT: (Addressing all of the Press who had assembled) The whole front row is under suspicion, especially Earl (Mr. Godwin) who, when the last Press Conference was photographed, was caught leaning over my desk in the most suspicious way.

However, we will go on. I have to have a copy before I talk about it. There was a copy on my desk three minutes ago. I will get another copy from the State Department.

No. 1, for the conference in Panama, the Under Secretary of State (Mr. Sumner Welles) is going down there to represent this country. I think that covers that.

Next, I have signed the Proclamation of Neutrality as between the United States and South Africa which, we have been officially informed, is in a state of war. That is the Union of South Africa.

No. 3, the Proclamation of Neutrality in regard to Canada is drafted but final action by the Canadian Parliament, as you know, has not yet been taken.

And the Proclamation I am waiting for is the Proclamation of Limited Emergency, which I will have to explain to you when I get it. It will be here in a minute or two. So, in the meantime, if

there are any questions you want to ask, go ahead.

One question will be on the report on the ATHENIA and that will be given out by the State Department sometime today. It will be the literal and, I think, verbatim copy of the reports from our two Naval Attaches in London. It is simply given out as their report without comment, comment being, I think, unnecessary.

Q Can you tell us of the extra session situation?

THE PRESIDENT: On the special session, there isn't any news. It is still in the study period. I cannot tell you any more because that is the simple truth. Naturally, I have been talking with various members of the House and the Senate for some time but, literally, there isn't any news because there has been no decision.

Q Is the action of the leaders favorable to a special session, that is, generally?

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot tell you that.

Q Is it still just a question of when or is it both a question of when and whether?

THE PRESIDENT: There has never been a question of whether and the date last week was between the first of September and the second of January and it is now between the eighth of September and the second of January.

Q Is there any doubt at all or should anyone have any doubt about your intention to ask for a repeal of the present neutrality law, the so-called neutrality law?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you could assume that.

Q May I go further with that question?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q I hear, although I am unable to touch the evidence or produce the evidence, that there is a rising sentiment in the country for the repeal of the embargo. Are you conscious of that, or would it affect you in any way at all?

THE PRESIDENT: I think I had better not answer --

Q (interposing) You do not mind my asking?

THE PRESIDENT: No -- because you people are just as good a judge of that as I am.

Q The report is also that you are going to have a short session, limited to neutrality.

THE PRESIDENT: I think I told you last week, and the only way I can answer that is in the same way, that as far as I can tell at the present time it seems unnecessary to ask for anything except a repeal of the embargo -- action on the so-called neutrality law.

Q In other words, it would not run into the next regular session?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I see absolutely no reason for it because, as you know, while Congress is not in session there are always a number of small things which it would be nice to have acted on but it is not essential that they be acted on.

Q Mr. President, there have been some intimations and suggestions that the Administration might recommend changes in the Johnson Act. Has anything been crystalized on that?

THE PRESIDENT: I never heard of it. That is a new one.

Q Anything on profiteering?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of. In other words, the statement that I could not think of anything that was absolutely necessary

other than the neutrality angle covers almost all cases.

Q Can you tell us anything about the profiteering studies that are being planned?

THE PRESIDENT: No. The only thing I can say on that is that as to some of the things that happened yesterday and the day before, there are a lot of perfectly well-meaning people who went to retail stores and found that some of the prices had gone up on foodstuffs, the case of two or three people in the White House, who could not buy more than five pounds of sugar.

Of course the real fact is that there is an actual surplus of food of every variety in this country. There is no conceivable shortage and, as Secretary Wallace said yesterday, all of this fear of shortage of sugar, or a shortage of flour, or a shortage of this, that or the other thing is merely one of those things that we, all of us, ought to do our best to make people realize that they must not get excited about something that does not exist. There is not any shortage and we have got plenty of everything.

On the question of prices, there is so much surplus in all the normal commodities that, while prices of foodstuffs which have been exceedingly low may come up a little bit, they are not going to see the rise, there will not be a repetition of some of the prices we had during the World War. It is an entirely different situation.

Q Will the United States, at the Panama Conference, attempt to inject into the program this plan to keep the Western Hemisphere free from war?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the State Department and all the other Governments which will be represented are, at the present time, studying what they call an agenda and I do not know what it is going to be. In other words, the agenda will be determined by the nations sitting there, not the United States but all the nations together.

Q Has the date of that conference been set?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it has.

Q I think not.

THE PRESIDENT: Again I would have to have a little bit of latitude; I won't say between now and the third of January but I think between now and the first of October.

Q Have you that Proclamation before you?

THE PRESIDENT: I have and here she is. I am going into this with a little care just so -- what will I say -- scarehead stories won't be written. This is all off the record that I am talking about.

Now, a thing called "Declaration of National Emergency" is provided for in a great many statutes, not just one, and if one were to assume to issue a Proclamation of National Emergency without any limitation, scarehead lines might be justified because, under that, the Executive could do all kinds of things.

What I want to do and what all of you want to do is to make it clear that there is no intention and no need of doing all of these things that could be done. There is need of doing a few, what might be called, simple and minor things within peacetime authorizations. In other words, there is no thought in any shape, manner or form of putting the Nation, either in its defenses or

in its internal economy, on a war basis. That is one thing we want to avoid. We are going to keep the Nation on a peace basis in accordance with peacetime authorizations.

That is why the title of this Proclamation really tells the true story: (Reading)

"PROCLAIMING A NATIONAL EMERGENCY IN CONNECTION WITH THE OBSERVANCE, SAFEGUARDING, AND ENFORCEMENT OF NEUTRALITY AND THE STRENGTHENING OF THE NATIONAL DEFENSE WITHIN THE LIMITS OF PEACE-TIME AUTHORIZATIONS"

In other words, I want to make it clear that in no shape, manner or form do we do anything except remain on a peace basis. The Government will function in accordance with the regular departmental and agency method. That is very clear. We are not setting up all kinds of war boards, administrative boards, such as we used when we were in a state of war. (Reading)

"BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
A PROCLAMATION

"WHEREAS a proclamation issued by me on September 5, 1939, proclaimed the neutrality of the United States in the war now unhappily existing between certain nations; and

"WHEREAS this state of war imposes on the United States certain duties with respect to the proper observance, safeguarding, and enforcement of such neutrality, and the strengthening of the national defense within the limits of peace-time authorizations;"

That is the main point to get across. (Continuing reading)

"and

"WHEREAS measures required at this time call for the exercise of only a limited number of the powers granted in a national emergency:

"NOW, THEREFORE, I, FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, President of the United States of America, do

proclaim that a national emergency exists in connection with and to the extent necessary for the proper observance, safeguarding, and enforcing of the neutrality of the United States and the strengthening of our national defense within the limits of peace-time authorizations. Specific directions and authorizations will be given from time to time for carrying out these two purposes."

Now, in order to illustrate, at 12.30 the Attorney General is bringing in three or four Executive Orders. One of them, for example, relates to the Army.

On the Army, the authorized peacetime strength of the Army is 280,000 men. The Executive Order relating to the Army will allow the Army to recruit and call back what they call the first-line reserves -- ex-corporals and sergeants and things like that -- a little above this year's authorized appropriations but not anywhere near the 280,000 that are authorized as peacetime strength. I cannot give you the figures now because the final figure has not yet been decided. And there is no use running to the War Department and the Navy Department to find out because they do not know. I have not fixed it yet. I will between now and 12.30 but, when I fix that upper limit, it will be way below 280,000. That will be given out at 12.30.

Now, the object of that, in the case of the Army, is to -- I suppose the easiest phrase to use -- is to fill in the chinks, enough men to man certain defenses, such as the Panama Canal, enough men to Puerto Rico, enough men to fill up certain arms of the service which have been in the last few years, you might say, robbed in order to take care of some emergency things like aviation that we were trying to build up. Now, it is to repay these borrow-

ings of men that we made from various branches of the service, which today have these chinks in them.

The same thing will apply to the Navy. As I remember it, the total authorized peace strength of the Navy is 180,000 men. At the present time we have between 115,000 and 120,000. Right, Dan (Captain Callaghan)?

CAPTAIN CALLAGHAN: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: And under this Executive Order relating to the Navy, we will have additional recruiting and calling back of the first line of reserves, in other words, experienced Navy enlisted men who served their eight years or twelve years or sixteen years or twenty years, and we will increase the present 115,000 to 120,000 by a comparatively small number, but we will not go to the 180,000 of authorized peace strength. The object of that is, again, to fill in certain chinks or gaps. The Fleet is only 85% manned, the active Fleet ships in commission. It is to fill in that 15% so that all batteries, all watches, can be made full-time. It is to put into commission some of what they call the priority I. class of the out-of-commission destroyers, not by any means all of them. We have, I think, about 116 and we will probably put back into active commission only about a third of that number.

Then with the Marine Corps, a small additional number, again not up to the authorized peace strength of the Marine Corps, to fill in certain gaps in the Marine Corps.

So, you see, that is not exactly a startling thing to do; it is an ordinary precautionary measure.

The third Executive Order will merely carry out the exist-

ing law that says, "In the event of a national emergency there is appropriated $500,000. to the State Department for the aid of Americans in foreign countries." This makes that $500,000. available to the State Department.

And the fourth relates to what you might say is a combination of neutrality and national defense, an addition to the personnel of certain investigating agencies of the Government to protect this country against -- I suppose the easiest way of putting it -- against some of the episodes, some of the things that happened over here in 1914 and 1915 and 1916 and the beginning of 1917, before we got into the war. There was sabotage, there was a great deal of propaganda by both belligerents and a good many definite plans laid in this country to try to sway American public opinion, done by foreign governments. We do not have to specify. The older ones who are here can remember some of the episodes of that time. It is to guard against that and the spread by any foreign nation of propaganda in this country which would tend to be subversive -- I believe that is the word -- of our form of government.

Those are the only four things we are doing at this time and we see no other major needs for the future. There may be some minor things which will call for Executive Orders in the future but nothing that can be, in any way, construed as putting this country on a war basis. We are going on just as we always have, in running the Government.

Q Referring to the increase in the Army and Navy, are you making any increases in the National Guard?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, this will cover that.

Q In that connection, Mr. President, I assume that will cost money in addition to appropriations that have been made by Congress. Under this Proclamation, is it possible to spend beyond the appropriations of Congress for that purpose?

THE PRESIDENT: The law says that under this method, for example in the case of the Army -- let us take a simple example -- if we increase the Army by one-twelfth, obviously we have to pay -- this will be on a full year and it is only a ten-year (month?) basis so the figures do not completely check -- suppose it is a full year basis, suppose we increase the Army by one-twelfth or eighteen and something per cent, we have to feed those extra people, we have to clothe them and we have to pay them. That means that the Army appropriation for food, clothing and pay would only last until the first of June and we would have to get a deficiency appropriation from the next Congress to make up that deficiency. It goes in in the Deficiency Bill just as so many other laws allow the departments to create deficiencies out of current funds and go back to the Congress in the spring in the Deficiency Bill to carry the department through to the end of the year.

Q Mr. President, where will that $500,000. for the State Department come from for repatriating Americans?

THE PRESIDENT: It is a regular appropriation like all others.

Q It is there, but needs this Proclamation to be effective? Is that what you mean?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Does this Proclamation of an emergency have any effect upon shipping or foreign exchange?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think so, no.

Q Mr. President, will any of these recommissioned destroyers be used as convoys?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of.

Q They will be assigned to patrol work, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #578,
Executive Offices of the White House,
September 12, 1939, 4.10 P.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, how is everybody?

Q (Mr. Godwin) I cannot read any papers today. (Referring to the fact that the President's desk was clear of mail)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that (indicating) is a sheet of unused stamps; that is valuable.

Q What stamps are they?

THE PRESIDENT: They are the new Panama Canal stamps.

Q United States?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Then, of course, the Canal Zone got out a special series of their own down there that are awfully nice. The man who invented it told me about it the last time we were down there and he asked me what to put on it and I told him two series of pictures, one before and one after. In other words, a picture of the Cut before there was any water and now a picture of the Cut with a ship going through -- like that.

Q Is that the whole series that run up, one, two, five and ten?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I forget how many there are, seven or eight, I think.

Q I am glad you got James Whitcomb Riley on that series. A lot of people do not think he is a poet.

THE PRESIDENT: I know it. He is a Hoosier philosopher.

Q He is peculiarly American.

THE PRESIDENT: Gosh, there are a lot of people who should have gone on that we did not have room for.

Q The worst thing they will never forgive you for is putting Frances Willard on there.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I have to grant about every one hundredth request that comes from women. That's a fact. I turn down ninety-nine and have to give them something.

Q (Mrs. Black) We are listening.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. (Laughter)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think I have got anything that is real news.

Q Mr. President, Congressman Sabath this morning gave the impression, although he did not say so, that there would be a special session and that it would begin about the first of October?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I suppose his guess is as good as yours. I do not know yet but I think probably that you can make the guess that there will be an announcement soon. And do not ask me to define the word "soon" (pronouncing it s-o-o-o-n) or "soon" (pronouncing it s-u-n).

Q May we quote that word, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: The word "soon"? Yes, put it in quotes. (Laughter)

Q Does that mean that there will be a special session?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Does that mean that there will be a special session? (Laughter) What else could the announcement say?

THE PRESIDENT: What will we do, Fred (Mr. Essary)? It is a good guess.

Q In connection with the announcement of your Executive Office at Hyde Park -- I believe it was said that the brain trust is out

of the window -- is there any change in the status of Mr. Corcoran and Mr. Cohen --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Your question brings up -- I suppose we may as well tell the truth just here in the family. Up at Hyde Park the boys got some mighty good stories on Saturday, darned good, so they had plenty to write, but Sunday came along and Steve didn't have anything at all for them except the fact that I had gone to church and it was raining, and so they had to write something. There they were. And so they said to themselves, "What will we write about? First, the President is going to announce, call a special session, sometime during the coming week." That was perfectly all right because if it were the following week or the week after, they could write it once a week and eventually it will be right. (Laughter)

That was all right, but they said, "That is not enough. We have to send in something more," and the office was clamoring for copy, et cetera, so they said, "Here is a chance: We all know that down inside of our hearts we had set up a banshee, a sort of two-headed banshee. We know he was a banshee. He only appeared when one had bad indigestion and things like that but, nevertheless, he was a banshee, a very indigestible banshee." Then came this new Executive Order of the President. They said, "Why, here is our chance. Having set up a ghost, we cannot just let him roam through the world through all eternity. We have to kill him some day, a two-headed Corcoran-Cohen banshee, so here is our chance to prove that there was a banshee by killing it." And there is the origin of the Sunday story. (Laughter)

Q For the benefit of the non-Irish, would you mind spelling banshee?

THE PRESIDENT: Banshee -- b-a-n-s-h-e-e.

Q What newspapermen are telling you our secrets?

THE PRESIDENT: They did.

Q Did the expression, sir, out-the-window come out of the imaginative minds of the reporters?

THE PRESIDENT: Out the window?

MR. EARLY: No.

THE PRESIDENT: No, that was one of Al Smith's old phrases.

Q They quoted White House sources?

THE PRESIDENT: Out-of-the-window was invented by Al. However, another phrase was, of course, out of the mind of Fred Storm. You remember that phrase, "old potato" which, of course, was never said but it was good copy; it was all right.

Q Is there any change in Mr. Corcoran's and Mr. Cohen's position?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Is there any change in their status from what it was before?

THE PRESIDENT: No, just the same as it was before.

Q I am a little uncertain what the status was?

THE PRESIDENT: I should think you would be. A lot of other people are, too.

Q Mr. President, yesterday the British Ministry of Information, speaking officially, said you extended the Monroe Doctrine in your Kingston speech and had spoken of the interest of the United States of America in the preservation of the integrity of Canada from invasion. That places Canada in a special designation. Is there anything you can say as to that, as to the

interpretation to be placed on that at the present time?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I do not know whether I want to because it would take the implementation of a lot of notes on history.

When you come down to it, to put it in the simplest way, there was a good deal of conversation in Europe at the time that a number of portions of Central and South America had already won their independence and set up republics, and some of them were still fighting for their independence. There was a good deal of talk in Europe about some kind of a coalition or combination of powers to reestablish European sovereignty over portions or all of Central and South America. That was really the time of origin of the Monroe Doctrine and there was a great deal written about it at the time and, if you will examine the writings about it, you will find that the Monroe Doctrine, as accepted by the country in those days, included a definite thought that no European power should reestablish sovereignty over any territory which had gained its independence and that that also applied to the changing of European sovereignty over those portions of the Americas which had not revolted and established their independence. Well, those portions, of course, were not very large either in number or territory except in the case of Canada. They represented a number of islands, most of them relatively small islands. Cuba and Puerto Rico remained Spanish. They were the largest of the islands. There were a number of French islands, Dutch islands, English islands in the West Indies and, on the continent, there was British Honduras in Central America and the three Guianas, Dutch, French and British, in

South America.

Well, as time went on, the sovereignty of those European nations over those islands in comparatively small places was pretty well accepted by the Hemisphere because we never had any trouble over them. In other words, the continued possession of these small pieces of land, islands and a few on the mainland, during 120 years, roughly, never bothered any American nation. There was never any demand to extend the sovereignty and practically the only case where there was any serious dispute was over a boundary question between British Guiana and Venezuela in the days of President Cleveland and we immediately, at that time, exerted -- I shall put it rather mildly -- our interest in the case and it was settled, settled by arbitration, as I remember it. But, during these 120 years, these nations that have had these small bits of territory have never given the Americas any trouble and, if you go back to the early discussions about the Monroe Doctrine, you will see on many, many occasions the interpretation of the Doctrine as including the objection to the transfer of any of these sovereignties to other European nations. As long as they remained in the possession of the existing powers and did not give anybody any trouble, why that was all right.

So you might say that the speech which I made up in Canada last year about Canada itself was merely not a new statement but a restatement of the original intent of the Monroe Doctrine and that, if it applies to Canada, it applies equally to Dutch Guiana and Curacao and the Bahamas and the British Honduras and

Guadeloupe and Martinique, Saint Pierre and Miquelon up on the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and so forth and so on. They are all right the way they are but it might represent a different situation to the Americas, all the republics, if the sovereignty of those places were transferred to any other non-American nation. That is all there is.

Q Mr. President, the sentence I was particularly interested in was the one in which you said, "I give to you assurance that the people of the United States will not stand idly by if domination of Canadian soil is threatened by any other empire." I have no doubt that that was the statement.

THE PRESIDENT: Right. That is exactly what I said and exactly what I meant. It applies to all of the Americas. Nothing very new in that.

Q No, that is true, but there is a report that at the present time there is in Canadian-American waters joint operation of a patrol and so on. Is there anything being done along that line or at the Sioux locks?

THE PRESIDENT: No. We are patrolling, as you know.

Q But it has not been increased, the number of patrol vessels?

THE PRESIDENT: We want to know what is going on in all American waters and that is all it is. Nothing more and nothing less.

Q Mr. President, the prices of some of the major raw resources and commodities have been going up. Are you watching that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Do you see any profiteering there?

THE PRESIDENT: You mean profiteering on the production end or the

retail end? You see, there is all the difference in the world.

Q Either end.

THE PRESIDENT: Of course the retail story is an entirely different story from the production end. On the production end, it depends entirely on what raw material you are talking about. For example, take the simple case of cotton: The present world price of cotton is so low that the South will go broke on it. They are implementing the price by soil erosion payments and we are getting rid of some cotton as well through the export subsidy method and the price of cotton, we hope, in spite of the world, very large world carryover, ought to go up.

In the case of wheat, we all know the word "parity" -- parity -- at the present time the present price is way below parity but, on the other hand, parity is not $2. or $3. or $5. The Department of Agriculture has the figure but, as I remember it, it is around $1.15 or $1.20. Also, there is the fact that, if we went up to the parity price, the actual cost to the consuming public of bread would go up a very unappreciable amount.

Q Mr. President, Governor Phillips of Oklahoma has announced he has asked you to stop work on the Dennison Dam project in Texas because of damage to about 100,000 acres of Oklahoma soil. Have you any comment?

THE PRESIDENT: I got the letter and I referred it to what? -- the War Department, Agriculture and, I think, Interior; I am not sure.

Q Secretary Woodring has already replied that Congress has directed it be built and as far as he is concerned --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Oh, it has got to be built; Congress

said so.

Q Will any order or any action be taken on any other commodities besides sugar?

THE PRESIDENT: No; nothing at the present time.

Of course, among the non-agricultural, I am watching the price of copper a little bit because, as everybody knows, we can produce an awful lot of copper in this country at a very nice profit at around 12½¢ and we know that, during the World War, it got up as high as 28¢, and we do not want a recurrence of things of that kind because, eventually, it comes out of the taxpayers' pockets.

Q Is that true also of steel?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not very much concerned about steel because I have not heard anything of the price going up.

Q Anything besides anti-trust action that can be taken to stop it?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know; I do not know.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #579,
Executive Offices of the White House,
September 15, 1939, 10.45 A.M.

Q (Mr. Godwin) See that? (Showing the President a small, silk American flag, labeled, "Made in Japan.")

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Isn't that funny?

THE PRESIDENT: I was sitting around last night -- this cannot be used -- after dinner. There was an ash tray that somebody gave me three or four years ago. I was playing with it. It was marked, "Made in Germany." I turned over another one, looking to see where it was made, "Made in Japan." Can't use it.

(Quite a number of correspondents were coming into the room.)

I do not know why everybody is coming. There isn't any news.

Q Mr. Borah made news, that is why they are here.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I have any news. The SQUALUS was actually put in dry dock at 6.00 o'clock this morning. That is the only recent thing we have.

Q Mr. President, are you familiar with what Senator Borah said last night?

THE PRESIDENT: I have got to confess that I have not read it nor did I hear it.

Q Would you let me ask you a question about it if I read a sentence?

THE PRESIDENT: I am afraid I ought to read the whole thing.

Q Will you present your Message on the first day of the session, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know, Fred (Mr. Essary).

Q Do you know whether you will present it in person?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, the Message will either be read by me up there, or sent up on the first day, on Thursday, but I do not know whether I will go up yet.

Q Mr. President, do you plan to ask for anti-profiteering legislation in the special session?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I expect to.

Q I did not understand?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not expect to.

Q Does the statement still hold, Mr. President, that there is nothing in the way of legislation except the neutrality?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q No deficiency appropriations?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Any war risk insurance?

THE PRESIDENT: No, what?

Q War risk insurance?

THE PRESIDENT: I think they are doing that without further legislation.

Q No, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Aren't they?

Q No deficiency requests?

THE PRESIDENT: No, regular session.

Q If I am not mistaken, sir, there is one of the Committees of Congress that has some war risk legislation before it, I think.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q The Maritime Commission claims they need new legislation before they can provide insurance for shipping.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know, frankly. I am ignorant on the subject.

Q Mr. President, is there any place I can find a summary of what our neutral rights are under international law?

THE PRESIDENT: I would read the last revised edition, in four volumes, of John Bassett Moore's work on international law. (Laughter)

Q But I did ask for a summary.

THE PRESIDENT: Most of people have tried to summarize it. Now there is a real chance to make a name for yourself. Do the summary yourself.

Q What is the American Government's definition of territorial waters -- how far out?

THE PRESIDENT: As far as our interests need it to go out.

Q As far as what?

THE PRESIDENT: Our interests require it to go out.

Q That is no better than we got from Steve (Mr. Early) the other day.

THE PRESIDENT: That is a hot one off the bat. Nobody ever defined it that way before but it is a pretty good definition.

Q Does that reach to the Rhine, Mr. President? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I am talking about salt water. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, at this conference you will have with the leaders on Wednesday, will the details of your program be worked out then or have you formulated one?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know; I have not got to thinking what we will talk about.

Q Will you send a Message down to the Panama Conference?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Are you familiar with the Secretary of State's statement of yesterday,

possibly?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q A question arose in my mind which may be foolish but he mentioned there was a difference between our rights under international law and what our own national laws had done to them -- they had proscribed or modified them, cut them down. I think John Bassett Moore probably would show at times when a nation makes a stand or makes a modification, that eventually that becomes a precedent or part of international law.

THE PRESIDENT: It depends on what nation does it.

Q Would you say there is any danger of our rights being modified permanently by our continued stand?

THE PRESIDENT: International law has been built up by the acceptance of certain modifications which come along with changing times and the development of new instruments of war, new instruments of commerce, and no one nation can change international law all by itself. But if certain things which were adopted by any nation or group of nations at one given time come to be accepted by the world as a whole over a period of years, that becomes what they call international law.

Q Yes, sir.

Q Mr. President, if all the neutrality legislation on our statute books were repealed and our reliance placed purely on international law, would that satisfy the Administration viewpoint?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, now you are coming down to my Message to Congress, aren't you? And it has not been written yet. You see, you are gradually narrowing the thing down. Any answer to that question

would be a complete giveaway of what I am going to say. (Laughter)

Q When a belligerent nation stops the ship of a neutral nation and seizes the cargo destined for another belligerent, is that any violation of international law?

THE PRESIDENT: Read John Bassett Moore, Volume 2, Chapter 5, on blockade. Also read the history of the Civil War, the American position during the Civil War, the blockade of the Southern Coast. It is very interesting and quite pertinent today. Of course, a great many things have been changed in methods of warfare but the position taken by this country, I should say by the North -- these are shipments from Europe -- it makes an interesting study. Of course, as you know, in international law the question of blockade depends largely on the effectiveness of the blockade.

Q Mr. President, have you given any thought to the question of the Ministership to Canada?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet, Fred (Mr. Wile).

Q Do you contemplate the issuance of any further Executive Orders under your Proclamation?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q There is a general assumption that you want the arms embargo repealed in order that we might help England and France. Is that assumption correct?

THE PRESIDENT: You will know more about it on Thursday next.

Q Mr. President, have you any recent reports on economic conditions and the state of unemployment in this country?

THE PRESIDENT: I asked for that yesterday. I asked Mr. Carmody and the Labor Statistics Bureau to check up on that because we have

not had a check for about a month.

Q Mr. President, is there any possibility or has there been an order issued placing a time limit upon all Public Works allocations?

THE PRESIDENT: All Public Works allocations stopped last December.

Q Some had a time limit and some did not.

THE PRESIDENT: On the question of starting them or completing them?

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. As far as I know, practically all of them are under way.

Q But there has been no order issued from here placing a time limit on completion?

THE PRESIDENT: No. The only changes at the present time -- for instance, John Carmody brought in yesterday, oh, about twenty of what they call those books of approval -- sometimes a book contains one project, sometimes fifteen or twenty -- and we have to have an "O.K., F.D.R." on them.

And the list yesterday, oh, I suppose there were forty or fifty different projects, and some of them, the grant or the loan and grant, were cut down, reduced. Well, that gave you a minus sign on the total of appropriations. Others, because of various conditions, had to be slightly increased, but they were all going projects. The pluses just about cancelled the minuses. There were no new projects, just those pending on P.W.A. now.

Q I see that Frederick Davenport is on your list today. That brings to me a picture of personnel improvement. Is there anything you can tell us now for the benefit of the local papers or the rest of them that is interesting on that subject?

THE PRESIDENT: Only, as you know, that we are going ahead as fast as we can to put as many agencies as possible that are not under civil service under civil service. We have got to the point now where practically all that can legally be put under civil service are being put in. There are some agencies that Congress has said we could not put in civil service.

Q Can you tell us anything of the work of the Reed (Mr. Justice Reed) Committee that you appointed?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q The committee headed by Justice Reed, wasn't it?

THE PRESIDENT: I understand they are very nearly ready to report. They have not reported yet.

Q Mr. President, is there anything you can tell us about the significance of this Pan American Conference at this point in world --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) You had better let it develop itself.

Q This may bore some of those national columnists but it is quite important to us. You and Louis Brownlow were here twenty-five years ago, in 1914, and you saw the effect of the World War on Washington and on the personnel of the Government. Louis Brownlow has been in here constantly and it brings up to my mind a picture of possible plans or suggestions that you might be getting ready for some such emergency. Maybe I am way ahead --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I won't even say "way ahead" because the actual situation is that there have been no plans or even consideration of plans for Washington that would be even distantly connected with our being in the war.

Q Anything on the Budget?

THE PRESIDENT: I have forgotten the date or what was due. Ask the Director.

Q Going back to the definition of territorial waters, is the fact that our ships are patroling two hundred miles out any indication that our territorial limits --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No, they are out there for information, nothing else.

Q Does the Administration contemplate strengthening the forces of the Far East to enforce this neutrality --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #580,
Executive Offices of the White House,
September 19, 1939, 4.10 P.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Have a good time?

Q (Mr. Russell Young) Oh, fine. Did you see the pictures? Those cartoons of General Watson? I showed some to Steve (Mr. Early).

THE PRESIDENT: I did not see them. Pictures of Pa?

Q (Mr. Young) Sure. The General Goering of the White House. (Turning to General Watson) Where is that General Goering picture?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, the one you had of Pa. That was a peach.

Q Does your mother have a birthday this week?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, Thursday. It is to be celebrated the next time I get home.

Q When will that be?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know.

Q Think you will go up this week?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. I am not making a plan until after Thursday.

Q Eighty-three?

THE PRESIDENT: Five (meaning eighty-five).

Q You had better get up there.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Where is Earl?

Q Having his semi-vacation.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we are all glad to see Major General Young back.

Q (Mr. Young) Thank you, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Outside of that society note, I haven't got anything.

Q Did you hear Mr. Hitler's talk on the radio?

THE PRESIDENT: I started to and then I had some people come in and I heard about the first three minutes.

Q No comment?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, there are reports in Rome that the Pope has communicated with you, asking your cooperation in some move against the partition of Poland. Have you received such communication?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Will you remark, sir, upon the visit of the mayors who just left?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, they brought in a fine Resolution. They talked about city planning and that was about all.

Q What Resolution are you referring to, the one on neutrality?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us anything in advance of Mr. Tobin's (Mr. Daniel J. Tobin, Vice President of the A.F. of L.) visit this afternoon?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Dan Tobin?

THE PRESIDENT: No, except that he was coming in for the last three weeks and this is the first chance I have had to see him.

Q Do you contemplate a peace message -- a message of labor peace to the American Federation of Labor Convention that happens next week?

THE PRESIDENT: I had forgotten it was next week. I will send a message. I do not know what it will be. It will probably mention

labor peace, that is a good guess.

Q Can you comment on city planning -- and what was discussed?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I think possibly Betters (Paul Betters, Secretary of the United States Conference of Mayors), or whoever it is, will take care of it with you.

Q Will Russia's entrance into the war make any change in your neutrality program?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you had better ask the State Department about that.

Q Mr. President, I just asked you unofficially but for the matter of the record, do you think you will go up to your mother's birthday this week end?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not believe we will get off this week end but we are going to celebrate the birthday the first time I go up.

Q She is eighty-five?

THE PRESIDENT: Eighty-five on Thursday.

Q Is there any study being made of the possibility of reducing the Cuban sugar tariff by Proclamation or any other means?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of. You had better ask Henry Wallace. I do not know whether he is making a study or not. I have not heard anything about it.

Q Stories have been published that Administrator Andrews (Wages and Hours) has resigned and is going to be succeeded by Colonel Fleming. Can you tell us anything about that?

THE PRESIDENT: No news on that.

Q Anything you can tell us in advance of your conference tomorrow with the legislative leaders and Governor Landon?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think so. You know as much about it as I do.

We are going to discuss Congressional action on the so-called Neutrality Bill.

Q I suppose you got started on your Message today, did you not, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Comparatively long or short?

THE PRESIDENT: Comparatively short.

Q Compared with what? (Laughter) State of the Union? (Laughter continued)

Q Compared with the state of the Union Message?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, compared with -- of course my Messages on the state of the Union were almost the shortest on record. Well, this will be shorter than that.

Q Mr. President, have you decided whether you will deliver the Message in person?

THE PRESIDENT: I think I am going up.

Q Have you fixed upon an exact hour for going up to Congress, if you do?

THE PRESIDENT: We are talking now with the Speaker and the leaders of both Houses about the possibility of two o'clock but you had better not put that down as certain. Can we?

MR. EARLY: It is all right.

THE PRESIDENT: Steve says we can; two o'clock on Thursday.

MR. EARLY: That is tentative, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: That is tentative.

Q Any resurvey being undertaken in the light of happenings abroad?

THE PRESIDENT: Not resurvey -- continuing survey. Nothing new because

they are going on all the time.

Q Do we have to find out about tomorrow's conference the way we found out about the Military Committee's conference?

THE PRESIDENT: Which was that?

Q The secret time you had the Military Committee in here for a conference?

Q Frontier on the Rhine?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I think you know all about it, everything I know. You know who is coming.

Q But afterwards?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, afterwards I hope we will get out a very simple four or five-line, maybe ten-line statement, the way we did after the meeting of the Foreign Relations Committee last July. And then you good people will run around and catch them in the hotels or in the barrooms (laughter) or back in the Congress, and then you will try to worm out from each one something of what happened and you will add them all up together and get the lowest common denominator and then you will write your story. Well, that is all right because it is customary.

Q That is what we'd like to know.

Q Would you like to receive us after the conference?

THE PRESIDENT: I would not. (Laughter)

Q That will keep us out of the barrooms, Mr. President. (Laughter)

Q Instead of the barrooms, why cannot Mr. Early make a nice summary?

THE PRESIDENT: That is what we are going to do, eight or ten lines.

Q (Miss Fleeson) You do not believe you can take that long with so many Senators and Congressmen and condense it in eight or ten lines?

Q General Pershing has advocated expansion of the Army to full peace-time strength. That comes on top of your recommendation. Would you care to comment on his --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) All I can say at the present time is that I have no further plans at this time. Whether it will be necessary in the future is something that is now in the lap of the gods. I can go up from the 227,000 that I have authorized to the 280,000 -- I think it is --

Q (interposing) Approximately.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, approximately 280,000, but no plans for doing it at the present time.

Q Is it still your idea to confine the session to the one purpose?

THE PRESIDENT: I am making that the only recommendation.

Q In the event that it is taken up in the Senate, as everybody expects, what will the House do?

THE PRESIDENT: You will have to ask them.

Q There is a proposed industrial mobilization provided by the War and Navy Department. Have you studied that and has it your approval?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know which one you are referring to, the one that goes back to 1920?

Q The 1939 one, which is a revision of the 1936 plan.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I have not seen that.

Q Will there be any deficiency estimates, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I think not; I do not think so.

Q Mr. President, you have occasionally indicated, I believe, that you would like to see our neutrality based entirely on the principle of international law. Would it satisfy the Administration if the

present Act were repealed outright?

THE PRESIDENT: You had better wait until you see the Message on that.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #581,
Executive Offices of the White House,
September 22, 1939, 10.50 A.M.

Q (Mr. Godwin) How do you do?

THE PRESIDENT: Did you have a good holiday?

Q (Mr. Godwin) I spent it out here in the Press Room, mostly, listening to the radio. (Laughter)

That was a good show up at the Capitol yesterday. Did you see it? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No. When you were away last week there were all kinds of ribald remarks made about your absence. It was all right.

Q (Mr. Godwin) I know it; I got a report on it.

Q (Mr. Young) The Boss made a couple himself, too, Earl. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No quarter, isn't that right?

Q (Mr. Godwin) Do you remember Ham Lewis (Senator James Hamilton Lewis, of Illinois) said, "Mention me, kindly if you will, but mention me."

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

I think I am almost completely devoid of news.

Q Any idea when you are coming back (from Hyde Park)?

THE PRESIDENT: Probably Sunday afternoon or Sunday night.

Q The girls want to know if that is a new suit (that you are wearing) or not?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it is (examining inside coat pocket).

Q Has that a date in it?

THE PRESIDENT: '36. (Laughter)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

Q I said it was at least a year old. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: It is what you might call a perfect thirty-six. (Laughter) That ought to hold you.

I do not think I have anything this morning. We are going up tonight and coming back -- going up on the night train and coming back Sunday afternoon or Sunday night, probably, subject to change, because up there I am really not on a twenty-four-hour basis of the Treasury Department but a three-hour basis; in other words, the length of time it takes to get the train down from Albany to Hyde Park or Highlands.

Steve (Mr. Early) says the Secret Service does not want definite times of train departures or railroads put down ahead of time in the press, not tonight. I do not know how you are going to disguise that but --

Q Past tense.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think we have any particular news outside of that. As a matter of public information, vessels have sighted a submarine, nationality unknown but not American, off the southern boundary of Alaska, where it joins the Canadian territory, in what they call the Inside Passage, and a submarine, nationality unknown, has been seen off Boston, about sixty or seventy miles south of the tip end of Nova Scotia and about half way between there and Nantucket Shoals.

Q Mr. President, what do you do with that information?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Is the Maritime Commission informed of all those?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Anyone else?

THE PRESIDENT: The Coast Guard, of course.

Q Was it sighted by American ships?

THE PRESIDENT: We never will disclose any of these sources for perfectly obvious reasons. However, they are perfectly reliable. May be anything.

Q Is the Neutrality Patrol in that vicinity?

THE PRESIDENT: There is a patrol all the way from our northern border, roughly, down to and including the Carribean and the Gulf of Mexico.

Q We cannot hear back here.

THE PRESIDENT: I was asked whether this was in the neighborhood of the Neutrality Patrol. Well, it is a little difficult to say because we are maintaining a patrol all the way from Eastport, Maine, to and including the Carribean and the Gulf.

Q That is on the Atlantic side, but what about that submarine on the Pacific side?

THE PRESIDENT: There is no regular patrol over there, no.

Q Were they within our territorial waters? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you know my definition of them the other day. I guess that is good enough.

Q Are our proper interests involved by these submarines -- by observance of these submarines?

THE PRESIDENT: What kind of submarines are they?

Q They are not American.

THE PRESIDENT: No. They might be Swiss. (Laughter) Don't get too nosey.

Q Mr. President, is it possible they might be Canadian submarines?

THE PRESIDENT: Might be Bolivian or Afghan. You will get it if you keep on. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, what reaction have you had thus far to your speech of yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not had anything except a large pile of telegrams. I think Steve (Mr. Early) has told you about them. I have only seen a number, a small number of them.

MR. EARLY: I have not seen the Press today, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: I have no idea how many there are. I was simply told there are a large number. I have seen only forty or fifty myself; they have only sent the ones from governors or personal friends.

Q The story from the Hill that we are getting is that there is a large and increasing volume of telegrams and messages against your proposal. You are aware of that?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes.

Q How did yours run, do you know?

THE PRESIDENT: Do you know at all, Steve (Mr. Early)?

MR. EARLY: Yes, sir. I know from the tabulation kept by the telegraph office last night and up to ten o'clock this morning, they were pro, with the exception, I think, of, he said, eight to ten and two of those were not in exact opposition. They told me that they began to come in spontaneously; they were enthusiastic and the volume was in excess of any received after any of your recent speeches.

Q Did you get an idea as to how many there were?

MR. EARLY: Yes, I asked him and they said they had not counted them.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. President.

MR. GODWIN: Snappy work, Mr. Young, snappy work. (Laughter)

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #582,
At the site of the new Library,
Roosevelt Estate, Hyde Park, New York,
September 23, 1939, 11.50 A.M.

(The President was seated in his car. He had just been photographed, watching the steam shovel which was digging the site for the foundation.)

Q (Mr. Durno) Have you heard about this Landon interview? (Mr. Durno had received the following telegram:)

"New York, N. Y., Sept. 23, 1939.

"George Durno, I N S

"Landon issues statement which given all press associations saying 'Greatest single contribution President Roosevelt could make in present troubled situation would be to tell country categorically he does not want third term and would refuse nomination if offered him,' says favors adjourning all party politics but up to President remove himself from picture to insure that result. Try to get reaction.

"Faris 8.10 AM"

THE PRESIDENT: I would have to get the whole thing, George. I cannot answer any questions. It is a telegram that may be just partial quotes. Sorry, but I have to protect myself.

MRS. JAMES ROOSEVELT: I should hope so.

THE PRESIDENT: Isn't that right? You would, if you were in my place.

(There was a slight pause.)

I will give you a line, off the record, just as a lead for your stories.

Q We could use it.

THE PRESIDENT: Not attributed or anything like that -- that I have,

ever since -- what was it? -- the third of September, or something like that, pleaded that the country should keep politics out of this very serious world situation. That is a good lead. Right?

Q We could --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No, you cannot even attribute it. Or, you could use one of the old gag lines, "Sources close to the White House"; that is Bill (Mr. Hassett).

Q Sources close to Hyde Park?

THE PRESIDENT: Sources close to Hyde Park, that is all right.

Q Mr. President, what about the birthday celebration?

THE PRESIDENT: Just a family dinner; family and neighbors tonight and nothing planned for tomorrow.

Q Church?

THE PRESIDENT: If I wake up in time but, having had very little sleep, as you know, I won't guarantee anything.

Q Any plans on returning?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know when. Of course that is dependent mostly on news from Washington.

Q Is there any news from Washington this morning?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I have not talked to them yet. I will, around lunch time.

Q I presume that you have talked to Mr. Hull since you arrived?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I have not talked to anybody.

Q No one at all?

THE PRESIDENT: Chiefly, I breakfasted and shaved.

All you people look very well. The French call it soignee. You are looking in the pink of condition. You probably went to

a beauty parlor. I think it is so nice to see people who have been to a beauty parlor.

Q That old bee tree (referring to the large oak tree in the center of the field, situated at the edge of the foundation pit) over there, that is not going to be disturbed?

THE PRESIDENT: We are going to avoid touching it except we will have to cut off on three branches on this side about five feet off the end. That won't hurt much at all. That is a historic tree that has got to be preserved.

I am going over to the sample now. If you want to take a picture of the wall, it is all right. (Referring to the sample panels of field stone pointed up with mortar in two styles to demonstrate how the exterior of the new Library would look.)

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #583,
Executive Offices of the White House,
September 26, 1939, 4.07 P.M.

Q Russ Young is not working today.

THE PRESIDENT: Where is he?

Q Has a bad cold.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: You remember last spring the Congress passed an appropriation for the purchase of what they called "strategic" or critical materials that were needed in this country as stock piles. The Secretary of War and the Acting Secretary of the Navy have suggested that I call attention to the fact that there are, at the present time, a few attempts -- they have not gone beyond the attempt stage -- being made by foreign purchasers to secure stocks of some of these strategic and critical materials which are essential to American industry and materials which we do not grow or find in this country, and that the principal ones of these are crude rubber, ferro grade manganese ore, ferromanganese -- I do not know the difference -- pig tin, metallurgical chrome and several others. Obviously, we do not want to export any of these from our own stock piles because we are actually trying to increase our own stock piles.

They suggest that it ought to be sufficient, at least for the present, to call this situation to the attention of those who are in a position to control it and that will be enough to stop it.

Q Can you identify these foreign purchasers by nationality?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, sir, could you explain the workings of this ninety-day credit discretion which you have in the neutrality bill?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I wish I could but it is beyond my powers. I do not know anything about it.

Q Who could tell me? I have tried two Administration Senators.

THE PRESIDENT: I would try the people who are in charge of the bill.

Q I have tried two or three, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: It is a very complicated subject and I do not know enough about it to talk about it intelligently. I am sorry I cannot help you. I would if I could.

Q Could you say this: The bill has been drawn as a cash-and-carry bill. There is an extension, in your discretion, of a ninety-day credit, changing that from a title-and-carry to a credit-and-carry bill?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not the faintest idea. I have not, probably, near as much idea as you have.

Q I have none. We are in the dark. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot help you; I do not know.

Q Mr. President, the Assistant Secretary of War has written a foreword to a book by a man named Cherne ("Adjusting Your Business to War" by Leo M. Cherne, Executive Secretary of the Tax Research Institute of America) on war mobilization plans. Can you tell us whether that represents officially the Government's war plans?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose the easiest thing to say is that I never heard about it until three-quarters of an hour ago, when the Secretary of War told me about it. I never heard of the book. There

is no book on Army, Navy or military prognostications which has the -- I think the correct word is imprimatur -- of the Administration; furthermore, that ninety per cent of all books on those subjects are written by people who know less than nothing about the subject.

Q You have never seen the book?

THE PRESIDENT: No; I never heard of it until half an hour ago.

Q In regard to these strategic materials, did you say that the foreign purchasers were trying to buy from our stocks?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, some that we have here now and, of course, we are actually trying to bring more in to add to our stock.

Q Buy our military stocks already accumulated or in the open market?

THE PRESIDENT: No, they are trying to buy in the open market, things like rubber.

Q How will that be stopped?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we hope they will stop it themselves.

Q You mean the sellers?

THE PRESIDENT: Let's put it this way: This is what I have in the memorandum and I will read it to you: (Reading)

> "I believe that it will be sufficient, at least for the present, to call this undesirable situation to the attention of those who are in a position to control it."

That is all. Period, end of the paragraph.

Q The Government controls what it has already purchased?

THE PRESIDENT: Controls what?

Q The Government controls that which is being purchased now, does it not?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, but we have got only a drop in the bucket. We are buying rubber in exchange for certain things like wheat and lard and certain things.

Q Cotton?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Now, that is going into a Government stock pile which is being renewed from time to time. We never had a stock pile of rubber and now we are getting one.

Q The stock buyers cannot control that?

THE PRESIDENT: This, to put it in plain language, is "A word to the wise is sufficient" -- at least, we hope so.

RCB 2/28/56

Q Is there any authority by which the Government can conserve such stock?

THE PRESIDENT: I said, "Period, paragraph." [Resources?]

Q When do you expect a report from your War Industries Board?

THE PRESIDENT: I believe in ten days or two weeks that their studies will be complete and I will thank them very much for having done an exceedingly good job and they will then disband.

Q Mr. President, do you envisage asking Congress to finance the $10,000,000. which is available for buying war material stock for these strategic materials?

THE PRESIDENT: Not at this time.

Q A question arises on the possible constitutionality of what I think is the opening sentence in the neutrality law, which permits Congress to find that a state of war exists, whereupon you are compelled, theoretically under the law, to issue a proclamation. The discussion between Mr. Krock and several other newspaper writers is going back and forth --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I should call it at the present time a moot question. It might come up to some Attorney General and some Supreme Court of the United States in the dim, distant days when perhaps all of us will be out of the Government or out of newspaper work or out of Washington, so do not let us worry.

Q A steamer off the eastern seaboard radioed this afternoon that it had sighted a submarine approximately off Ocean City, Maryland. Have you received that report?

THE PRESIDENT: I have received that report -- what was it? -- the I.N.S. I have nothing else from the patrols except (laughter) except a very -- I suppose we might call it a typical example of the use of the patrols. A couple of days ago, somewhere off the coast of Cuba, the patrols picked up a merchant ship, I think she was a tanker, and she had been painted gray, war gray, and her water line had been painted out. More than that, her name on the starboard and port bow had been painted out and her name on the stern had been painted out, and she was not flying any flag. Now, in time of peace or in time of war, a seagoing vessel operating under those conditions is an object of suspicion. Anybody that goes to sea knows that a ship with no name and no flag and no Plimsoll mark or anything else is an object of suspicion. So we followed her until we obtained information about her and we found out that she was proceeding on a peaceful and legitimate voyage. In other words, we ran down that case. What nationality she actually was is not my business to disclose to the Press, or what her name was or where she was headed. There was a ship acting under extraordinarily suspicious circumstances fairly close to

our own coast; we ran it down and it turned out to be nothing, a false alarm.

Q How far out was that, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, what? -- within the two thousand mile limit, something like that. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, we could not hear very well when you talked about the War Resources Board. Did you say they were going to disband after they made their report?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Will there be another body to take their place?

THE PRESIDENT: They will have finished their work.

Q Will they be called back?

THE PRESIDENT: Not for the same thing. The work is done. In other words, they have graduated.

Q There is a report today from Berlin on the news wires that says that Germany is considering returning an ambassador to this country and that some overtures have been made to the American State Department.

THE PRESIDENT: That may be on the cables but there has been nothing through up to a couple of hours ago; I have not heard.

Q Did you discuss neutrality legislation with Senator Maloney today?

THE PRESIDENT: What kind of legislation?

Q Neutrality?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q You would not want to elaborate on that?

THE PRESIDENT: No. (Laughter) And I doubt if he does too.

Q He does not.

Q Mr. President, would you care to comment on the widespread rumor that Maury Maverick is to receive a high appointment in the War or Navy Department?

THE PRESIDENT: No. And just off the record, I would not, if I were you.

Q Mr. President, I have a sort of double-header question. First, have you any plans for preventing profiteering in munitions if the embargo is lifted; and, second, what do you think will be the effect on our internal economy if a lot of industrial plants, which are now making things for domestic consumption, peacetime products, are geared to war trade?

THE PRESIDENT: What was the name of the book that you said had been written?

Q Cherne.

THE PRESIDENT: You had better read him.

Q He was the first one.

THE PRESIDENT: Cherne?

Q Cherne.

THE PRESIDENT: And who was the other expert, Major Fielding Eliot? You had better read them.

Q That is too much home work; much too much home work.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference $584,
Executive Offices of the White House,
September 29, 1939, 10.42 A.M.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Oh, look at that little sweetie! (Referring to the Red Cross doll which had been placed on the President's desk as a symbol of the Red Cross drive currently taking place.)

THE PRESIDENT: That is little Doris. (Referring to Miss Doris Fleeson)

Q That is cute.

THE PRESIDENT: Little Doris.

Q Doris?

THE PRESIDENT: Little Doris Fleeson.

Q Oh, is that Doris Fleeson? Where is she? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Earl (Mr. Godwin), I wish you would change your time. (Referring to time on the radio)

Q (Mr. Godwin) I will fix it.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, fix it, make it 9.00 o'clock instead of 8.30.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think I have any news at all. There have been, as usual, a number of reports of the presence of submarines of unknown nationality near the Coast, but they have not been verified and that is all I can say about that.

Q Has the Neutrality Patrol sighted any tankers from which the belligerent ships might be refueled?

THE PRESIDENT: Only the tanker report I told you about the other day.

Q Mr. President, within this 300-mile zone that is proposed at Panama, would merchant ships of belligerent countries engaged in inter-American trade be protected from belligerent action?

THE PRESIDENT: That you would have to ask Panama.

Q Mr. President, does the arming of belligerent merchant ships affect their status in American ports?

THE PRESIDENT: You had better ask John Bassett Moore.

Q I don't know if that is a news question -- I did not hear it.

THE PRESIDENT: Something about international law and armed ships.

Q The Maritime Commission announced the other day the chartering of about sixteen ships to the United States Lines. Are those steps being speeded up to avoid any possible incidents at sea by Government-owned ships?

THE PRESIDENT: I heard that story myself and I don't know anything more about it than you do. My recollection is that it is an application made last March.

Q Mr. President, would you care to comment on the form of a neutrality bill approved by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Is it satisfactory to you?

(The President did not answer.)

Q Do your reports show any two members on either side in agreement on the whole bill?

THE PRESIDENT: You had better go and ask up there. You cannot get me into a discussion. You might just as well quit trying. (Laughter)

Q Is there anything you care to say about that neutrality bill or anything connected with it?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Any comment to make on the statement of John Hamilton (Republican National Committee Chairman) this morning objecting to the adjourn-

ing of politics?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it speaks for itself. You have read my Message.

Q Mr. President, do you plan any further comment on the suggestion of Governor Landon that the third term question should be removed from further consideration?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I think not.

Q Well, I will try one, Mr. President. Do you think it is right to keep the general public from hearing the Senatorial debate on neutrality unless they get a card from a Senator? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, that is the women's organization that tried to get in yesterday.

Q Oh, no; it is the general policy. No more public galleries in the Senate. You have to get a card.

THE PRESIDENT: Are they afraid of wild women?

Q I would not know. (Laughter)

Q Have you seen the War Department's mobilization plan?

THE PRESIDENT: Which one? We have had one every year since 1921.

Q It is the same one dressed up each year. This one is 1939.

THE PRESIDENT: I have not; I think the last one I saw was 1936.

Q They brought that one up to date, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Have they?

Q Have you any objection to this latest report being made public?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think it does any good to make it public because, since 1921, there has been a new plan every year under the law and, after all, we are not in the war and I don't think we are going into the war and therefore I don't think it is a matter of great public interest at this time.

Q The Senate yesterday passed a Resolution asking for the enumeration of your emergency powers under the Proclamation. Can you tell us what your emergency powers are?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the Attorney General has a list of all statute references and there are a good many dating back a good many years and I think he has a list of statute references, and that is all one can give. I do not think there is any more story in there.

Q Senator Bailey yesterday took up the tobacco situation with you. Would you care to say anything about that?

THE PRESIDENT: You had better ask the Secretary of Agriculture. That is why I had him in here, because it is a long, complicated thing, between bright tobacco and four or five different kinds of tobacco and what kind of tobacco is going to be used on the other side during the European War. I told them I hoped it would be better tobacco than you could buy on the other side during the World War. I had some experience with that.

Q Chairman Dies, of the House Committee investigating un-American activities, said the other day that he had reliable information that the Administration had ordered the dismissal of 2,850 known Communists and Fascists from the Federal Government payroll.

THE PRESIDENT: I am waiting either for a statement saying where the reliable information came from or a list. It is all news to me. I only saw it in the paper.

Q The report from London says that Germany and Russia are about to make a peace move and hints that we may have been approached on it. Is there anything in that?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think there is a word in it.

Q Can you tell us now -- will you be able to tell us now whether the report of the War Resources Board will be made public?

THE PRESIDENT: Probably not, any more than they have been before.

Q The 1936 report was made public, was it not?

THE PRESIDENT: I have seen it in printed form; I do not know whether it was made public or not.

Q What, in general terms, was that War Resources Board to report about?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, let us give you some examples: There was a report on the possibilities of necessary industrial expansion -- and that checkup is made from time to time -- as to the location and stepping up of industry, as to the relationship of increased production with transportation, the relationship of stepped-up production with additional power facilities and, down the line, various forms of administrative handling of stepping up industry, the relationship of industry to agriculture -- a dozen different things. There is no story in it except an effort to make a controversy out of it and there isn't any controversy.

Q How about prices?

THE PRESIDENT: How about what?

Q Prices. Does it undertake --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Prices. I do not think they have done anything more about prices than has been done in all reports for the last twenty years. We want to keep prices from going through the roof. We want to keep the cost of living down as close to the present cost of living as possible. But all of this stuff is the usual precautionary measure. I do not think there is any great interest to the American people at this time because it is based

on the thought of our being in war and we have not got that thought.

Q Maybe the frightening document might make people not want to get into war?

THE PRESIDENT: There is nothing frightening. You know, perfectly well, the Army General Staff and the Navy General Board every single year are preparing, every year in our history, I imagine for 150 years, preparing and bringing up to date defense plans. The General Board of the Army and Navy do the same thing and, from time to time, there are special boards created -- there were a good many in the last six years -- to take up phases of national defense that fit into defense plans of the United States. Now, that is literally all that is in it.

Q The report of this War Resources Board, is that report to be made to the Chief Executive or to the Joint Board?

THE PRESIDENT: It will probably go to the Board.

Q For the use of the Joint Board?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and for the use of the Chief Executive too.

Q Would the War Resources Board be recalled in the event of an emergency?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, heavens, that is such a remote and "iffy" question, I cannot answer it. I do not expect an emergency; that is the answer.

Q Would it be permissible to ask if any of your information indicates that there is a possibility of a peace move to be made now?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't any idea.

Q It has been widely reported that you are trying to shift the Wages and Hours Administrator to another post and replace him with

Colonel Fleming?

THE PRESIDENT: I will have to say what I said about a week ago, that there isn't any news on that now.

Q Now.

Q Have you discussed the possible shortage of shipbuilding facilities with Navy men?

THE PRESIDENT: That is one of the things, of course, we are trying to keep up to date with all the time. We have been studying the total shipbuilding capacity of this country, not only for Navy ships but for merchant ships.

Q Have any of those studies had any bearing on the possible reopening of now idle facilities?

THE PRESIDENT: Are there any now?

Q In Philadelphia.

THE PRESIDENT: What yard is that?

Q Cramp Shipyard.

THE PRESIDENT: That is right. I suppose they have studied it, but I do not know.

Q I was wondering if they brought it to your attention?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Have you any week-end plans that are of interest?

THE PRESIDENT: I am going down the river tomorrow afternoon and coming back Sunday afternoon if everything is quiet tomorrow afternoon.

Q Would the creation of a safety band around Pan America require the expansion of the United States Navy?

THE PRESIDENT: That is too "iffy." I wish I could give you news but there isn't anything except speculative stuff.

Q Mr. President, who do you like in the World Series? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I am -- like in the Army and Navy football game -- I have to be entirely neutral. I know who I'd bet on, though.

Q Is that your home state pride?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #585,
Executive Offices of the White House,
October 3, 1939, 4.12 P.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, how is the gang today?

Q Very good.

THE PRESIDENT: Judge!

Q (Mr. Godwin) How do you do -- Judge? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: What has happened to Russell (Mr. Young)? Is he sick?

Q He is not well.

THE PRESIDENT: Flu?

Q Flu and grippe.

THE PRESIDENT: Quite a long treatment.

I am at a terrible disadvantage; I cannot see all the people. I think I will have a mirror put up there (indicating the ceiling).

Q Periscope. (Laughter)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, what is the news?

Q Mr. President, we have a report from Rome that Mr. Mussolini favors a seven-power peace conference in which the United States might be a participant. Have you had any reports or any intimations to that effect?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not had anything until an hour ago -- up to an hour ago and nothing came in on that.

Q In your talk with Mr. [Pierson] Pearson of the Export-Import Bank, did you discuss the extension of Latin American trade?

THE PRESIDENT: Very little; just the general idea that we are in favor of it.

RG 28 2d2 9/56

Q In the little, did you include the possibility of extending the lending authority of his bank?

THE PRESIDENT: Only in the same way that we recommended it -- what was it? -- last July, a limited amount. What did they get down -- they got down to an agreement, substantially, in the Senate -- was it a hundred million?

Q Yes.

Q Is that hundred million exhausted?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, they are sort of scraping the bottom of the barrel.

Q Will the present authorization, plus any small addition you may ask, be enough to handle its augmented program of Pan-American economic cooperation?

THE PRESIDENT: Where do I come in? I cannot authorize anything.

Q I misstated my question. Will the money that the Export-Import Bank has available be enough?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Have you any plans?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, what I said before, that I think we were substantially agreed on last spring. I do not think there was much kick on that hundred million dollars to which it had been pared down from the original recommendation -- what was it?

Q Five hundred million dollars.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it had been pared down to a hundred million. I think we were all satisfied that that would do and I suppose when the next session begins probably I will put in a recommendation for that amount, if conditions warrant at that time.

Q There are reports that American vessels have been aiding certain

belligerent warships by supplying them with fuel off the Atlantic Coast. Would you care to issue any word to the wise which might be sufficient in that connection? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I think if any of them have been doing it they had better stop.

Q Mr. President, the Comptroller General has been here, I think twice, in the last few days. Any news on that at all?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I can give you some news on that. It is one of those things about which I was talking to the two Justices of the Supreme Court who were down the river with me on Sunday and we agreed that it fell under the purview of a course that is given in every law school, a course called "Conflict of Laws," and it is a very interesting question.

Under the perfectly clear, direct laws, there is a top peace-time footing set, as you know, for the Army and Navy personnel, with an authorization to the President to increase the existing number of people in the Army and Navy, under an emergency, up to that total. Well, that means that we have the right to enlist additional men -- that is perfectly clear. Also, we have the right to expect what we talked about before in the last few weeks -- to expect the spending of money for their pay, for their food and for their clothing. Well, that is easy because there is no prohibition against incurring a deficiency in those items. However, then you come to other questions. You have got these new men coming in, a good many thousand of them, about a hundred thousand, the three services. We can feed them, we can clothe them and we can pay them but we cannot house them because the appropriation for hous-

ing -- that is specific items in last year's appropriation bill for a new barracks here, there or the other place, that type of appropriation -- says you cannot create a deficit in it. So we are up against that particular item. We can take care of them, feed, pay and clothe them, but we cannot build temporary barracks to put them in, so they are out of luck. In the same way, if you bring in a lot of additional men of that kind, you have got to have more hospital beds for them. It is a mathematical matter and it is very simple to put up temporary construction, just one-story wooden construction for additional beds in the nearest Federal hospital grounds. The best example is the Naval Hospital. I think about the only appropriation in this year's appropriation bill is to go ahead with the construction of this big Naval Hospital out here at Bethesda. We have plenty of money in that appropriation to dip in and put up some temporary beds, hospital beds, in the Newport Training Station or the Chicago Training Station, but we cannot do that because the same appropriation says that we cannot create a deficiency in that item. There is the illustration.

There are a great many similar cases where there is a conflict of laws. For instance, we are undoubtedly authorized to put reserve destroyers into commission. Well, theoretically, a reserve destroyer has everything on board that is needed. Practically, they do not. Various things are out of date, various things have been broken and perhaps there is a new type of this, that or the other thing that should go on in place of the old type. We have not got enough money to put all of these new destroyers in commis-

sion, yet the law intends that we should have them. Can we create a deficit in that?

Well, the Comptroller General has taken it up -- we have taken it up with him and, in effect, he has said, without any ruling, "Don't ask me for a ruling at this time because there is no question but that the Congress of the United States in January will straighten out this accounting matter," which is really what it amounts to, and after all the main, broad intent of the Congress was to allow us, in time of emergency, to take more people into the service and to put various out-of-commission units back into commission. That is the broad national purpose. The prohibitions are intended for a different purpose, to prevent us, in time of peace, from going ahead and starting a lot of building and things like that without the prior consent of the Congress.

And so we are going ahead to do those absolutely essential things, which is providing housing for the people we are taking in and hospital beds and putting it up to the Congress to straighten the thing out in January.

Q Mr. President, on that trip did you talk with Frankfurter (Associate Justice of the Supreme Court) about his Civil Service report?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, this is not an "if" question but it may be rather abstract. (Laughter) Have you anything to say about men who occupy confidential relationships and keep notes on those relationships and then write books and/or magazine articles about them?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, keeping it purely in the abstract -- (laughter) -- I should almost say that the question, in the abstract, answers

itself.

Q Mr. President, did you hear Bishop [Sheil] Shiel's speech last night?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think it was a very, very wonderful speech.

Q Has your attention been called to an order issued last week by the Treasury prohibiting the Collectors of Customs from giving out information on cargoes of incoming ships?

THE PRESIDENT: I had not seen it until I saw it in the paper this morning and I did not speak to the Secretary of the Treasury about it -- I meant to. It seems to me to be a perfectly normal carrying out of our neutrality.

Q The ships are already in and the cargo is delivered.

THE PRESIDENT: It seems absolutely necessary for the carrying out of our neutrality because, you know, the ship might go back.

Q It will go back and they will sink it, too, if it is an enemy ship.

THE PRESIDENT: It might go back.

Q Can you tell us whether the term, "purchases for cash," in your opening Message to Congress included --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Purchases of what?

Q "Purchases for cash," in your Message -- I think it was the fifth point -- do you consider that that includes the ninety-day credit provision?

THE PRESIDENT: You will have to go to the Senate on that.

Q Did you say whether the housing will be set up for the Army?

THE PRESIDENT: We have to put roofs over those fellows.

Q Where will they be located?

THE PRESIDENT: In the case of the Navy, at four training stations, Newport, Norfolk, Chicago and Santiago. In the case of the Army,

smaller units scattered pretty generally through the country.

Q Mr. President, why do you have to wait until January?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not; I am doing it now.

Q I mean to get the money?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not; I am doing it now. I am building them now and I am going to ask Congress to reimburse us in January.

Q Why don't you ask them now?

THE PRESIDENT: Because I am not asking them anything until the neutrality bill goes through.

Q Are you still of the opinion that you will not need to ask them anything else in this session?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think I will.

Q Mayor La Guardia said yesterday that you might have some comment on your meeting with him?

THE PRESIDENT: No. We talked about the Fair, continuing it in 1940.

Q Anything else, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: No; that is all.

Q Regarding this Rome report, which you said had been brought to your attention about an hour ago, can you tell us whether that communication was brought to your attention or not?

THE PRESIDENT: The Rome report? I had not heard a word about it.

Q Mr. President, in view of this safety zone declaration in Panama, can you tell us whether you plan an increase in the Neutrality Patrol at the present time?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I have not got any final report from the Navy as to the total number of vessels that they will need and, as I told you before, we are putting, I think it is forty of the Priority I

destroyers back into commission. Whether we will have to put a few more or not, I do not know yet, but I am getting a report from the Navy.

Q Is the Panama declaration now in effect as of today?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not heard anything. I have only seen a preliminary draft of it. Has it passed?

Q It was nominally accepted by the delegates last night. Is it your understanding that that will place it in effect immediately?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know.

Q What will be the cost of this housing program?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know; it is a very small sum, very small.

Q Can you tell us whether or not you are going to appoint soon a new Minister to Canada?

THE PRESIDENT: To tell you the truth, I have not thought about it for a week. I will have to do it. Thanks for reminding me.

Q Can you tell us about your conference this afternoon with Mr. Voorhis and those Congressmen? I understand they wanted an excess profits tax on profiteering?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I will tell you exactly what I told them. I told them that I was just as heartily in favor as they were of preventing the making of abnormal and very high profits just out of the war in Europe but that there was no need, in my judgment, for doing anything at the present time except studying it a little further. There were about three or four different methods that I had read in the paper that had been talked about. I thought it was more important to keep on studying it at the present time for, as far as I can see, nobody at the present moment has made any abnormal

or excess profits during the past month out of it. I told them I thought that we could review the subject perhaps a little bit later on, after the neutrality bill has gone through, and that I would be glad to have them come down again and, in the meantime, I recommended a great deal more study than has been given it.

Q As I recall it correctly, one of the gentlemen, I think Mr. Voorhis, said you had referred them to two or three individuals. Is there anything of interest in that?

THE PRESIDENT: Treasury, Commerce, S.E.C. and the Department of Justice.

Q Justice, did you say?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. In other words, all of those agencies have been studying the subject and nothing has come out of it yet.

Q You told them to speak of it later on after the neutrality bill has gone through. Can you tell us some of the reasons why you said after the neutrality bill?

THE PRESIDENT: Just what I said to the Congress. I had in my manuscript, "when and if" and, when I got on the floor I deleted the "if."

Q What could be done about it in case of hostile acts, which did occur within the neutrality bill?

THE PRESIDENT: Let us cross that bridge when we come to it. I do not think it means getting us into war.

Q Have the House leaders talked to you about these after plans? I understand they have a gentlemen's agreement after October ninth, anything can happen after that, and they have three-day recesses up to October ninth. They have several preferential bills they can take up.

THE PRESIDENT: I understood that after October ninth they just started making speeches.

Q No legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: I think not.

Q They have the antilynching bill?

THE PRESIDENT: No; I think it is just speechmaking.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #586,
Held while the President was seated in his automobile alongside the Presidential Special Train, following its arrival at Highland, New York,
October 6, 1939, 8.35 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think I know anything more than I did yesterday afternoon at 5.30.

Q Have you had any reports on the train at all?

THE PRESIDENT: No, except not enough sleep. It is going to be a lovely day up here.

Q One thing: I suppose you will get some reports?

THE PRESIDENT: If I do I will let you know.

Q We would like to know about that.

THE PRESIDENT: I will let you know as soon as anything happens.

Q How about Herr Hitler?

THE PRESIDENT: I believe he speaks today some time, I do not know when.

MISS LeHAND: He spoke this morning.

Q He already has spoken.

THE PRESIDENT: I will probably read it tomorrow, only do not put that down.

Q Mr. President, does the fact that these Naval vessels have been sent out to accompany the IROQUOIS establish any sort of a precedent?

THE PRESIDENT: Not at all. It shows a very good illustration of why the Patrol. In other words, they are out there already and it makes the whole procedure very much simpler.

Q Mr. President, the Havas Agency, I believe, had a report that this

Government or you, either one, had invited Raczkiewicz (President of Poland) to come to this country to live.

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of.

MISS LeHAND: I read that in the paper too.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, off the record, you know the Havas Agency. You remember our experience with them in the past. Who was that fellow we had down there; he was an awfully nice fellow -- he was a Frenchman?

Q Yes, I know who you mean.

THE PRESIDENT: He was an awfully nice fellow but, my God, he dreamt things at night. He was terrible. That is all off the record.

Q My office is worrying about a report of the successor to Elmer Andrews?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet; no.

Q Would we be wrong in speculating that the delay is due to the fact that Mr. Early said you are not going to send nominations until the neutrality issue is disposed of?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that is one reason.

Q Mr. President, getting back to the IROQUOIS a moment, is the fact that these ships have been sent out, might it be interpreted as indicating that this Government believes the reports from Germany are true, that it is going to be sunk?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing more to be said than that statement yesterday, just the simple, pure fact and nothing else.

Q Are you going to plant some more trees up here this trip?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I am not putting in any this fall. Of course, sometimes I do -- you can plant but, of course the best time is

the spring. I am going to make a final checkup in the next couple of days as to what the total acreage is that is going to be replanted and then where the new planting is to take place. You see, practically, I have to do two years' planting next spring. I do that myself. I think Steve (Mr. Early) misunderstood; Nelson Brown is not coming up here; I am doing that myself and then that gets sent up to Syracuse and then they send a man to check up later on. And then when I get through, in about two weeks, I do the same thing on the hardwood stand, not on the planting but on what I am going to cut during the winter. That is what they call "selective cutting."

Q This trip you are concerned with pines?

THE PRESIDENT: No, spruce.

Q Spruce?

THE PRESIDENT: Norway Spruce. Somebody wrote fir but it is all right; they are all fir.

Q Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't really a single bit of news but I will let you know if anything turns up.

Q Anything on the IROQUOIS? Can you give us a lead?

THE PRESIDENT: Again off the record, just for your information, Steve (Mr. Early) suggested that we tell them to send a radio report for the benefit of the family back here today. Well, that is the one thing she (the boat) could not do but the assumption for the family is that if you do not hear anything, everything is all right because, obviously, any piece of bad news would be the first thing that would come through the air. That is perfectly

clear. I doubt very much if we will get any news today or even tomorrow. She is a fairly slow boat. She can only do about fifteen to seventeen knots.

Q Any idea when the Naval ships are supposed to reach her?

THE PRESIDENT: When they will meet?

Q Yes, when they are supposed to contact?

THE PRESIDENT: If I did I could not tell you because there is a time element in there.

Well, have a good game of golf.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #587,
Executive Offices of the White House,
October 10, 1939, 4.10 P.M.

Q How are you, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I am fine but slightly sleepy. It is a sleepy day.

Are you feeling sleepy?

Q Yes, everybody.

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. President, how are you? (Speaking to Mr. Earl Godwin, president of the White House Correspondents' Association)

Q (Mr. Godwin) How do you do, Mr. President. Summer again.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, of course. I have got spring fever. I am awfully sleepy.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Say, Russ (Mr. Young) is right sick. Do you know it?

THE PRESIDENT: Still?

Q (Mr. Godwin) It hangs on to him when he gets a cold or pulmonary attack. It just hangs on and he has had a touch of pneumonia. It has been right severe.

THE PRESIDENT: I did not know that.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Neither did I until I talked to his wife. His doctor had warned him quite seriously not to go out too soon.

THE PRESIDENT: He ought to get away for a change of air entirely. It would be the best thing in the world for him.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

Q Mr. President, as you are undoubtedly aware, there is going to be a special election in California on the Ham and Egg Pension plan this year. Last year you referred to that plan as being somewhat fantastic and a short cut to Utopia. Can you tell us how you

feel this year?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think so. You might say that is a statement that covered all kinds of plans.

Q Still feeling the same way?

THE PRESIDENT: Covers all kinds of plans. That is rather a general statement but I think you can use it for this particular election.

Q It can be exhumed and used again, can it?

THE PRESIDENT: It is just repetition. I have got a whole lot of stuff that Steve (Mr. Early) took out of the files. He can show you the words. There is a Message to Congress and a letter to George Creel. Steve can show it to you.

MR. EARLY: Not a Message to Congress, radio.

THE PRESIDENT: Radio.

Q Why did you dig it out at this particular time?

THE PRESIDENT: Because somebody said he was going to ask a question, so it is all right. (Laughter)

Q Hot dog! (Laughter)

Q It was fixed.

Q Mr. President, I was going to ask about a plan for fifty dollars for every person over sixty. Would that take it in, or not?

THE PRESIDENT: These excerpts that Steve has cover the whole bag of tricks.

Q The Union of Maritime and Shipbuilding Workers in Philadelphia has sent you a letter requesting that you call a conference of all factors concerned to correct conditions in the shipbuilding industry. Have you done anything or planned to do anything on that?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. I think I sent that to the Maritime Commission or the Maritime Labor Board for preparation of a reply. It is still there.

Q Mr. President, unless I am mistaken, Dr. Abbot called on you twice. He saw you once, I think, but I did not see him when he left. Any news on his visit?

THE PRESIDENT: No. We talked about the problem -- the chief thing -- the problem of the Smithsonian in exhibiting its very wonderful collections and he pointed out that the Smithsonian is probably the greatest sight-seeing tourist center of the United States and that the Government owns this very wonderful collection but hasn't room enough to show it to the visiting public. We talked about that principally, and then certain research work which the Smithsonian is doing, the question of an appropriation of the large sum of $25,000. to carry it on for another year.

Q Any news in your conference with Ambassador Daniels?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Can you tell us about your conversations with Lord Beaverbrook?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I do not think so. He is an old friend of mine.

Q (interposing) What would be done --

THE PRESIDENT: I told him a newspaper story --

Q (interposing) What was it?

THE PRESIDENT: -- and some other things. (Laughter) We got reminiscing about a phrase that is used over here a good deal by certain people, a phrase beginning, "It is learned on the highest authority," or, "Sources close to the President allege," and so forth. So I -- we got talking about this Berlin story and I told him a

story, which I think he liked, about an old farmer who lived near me in the country --

Q (interposing) Talk a little louder.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the old farmer didn't talk loud, he just talked this way. (Laughter)

I saw him one morning and I wanted to call his attention and get his opinion on something. I said, "Pete, did you see by the papers --" He said, "Wait a minute, son. Did I see by the papers? Did you know an old friend of mine named Adam? Well," he said, "Adam got into trouble one afternoon and his wife told him that if he would eat one of those nice McIntosh apples he would get wise. Adam ate the apple and he and his wife both got thrown out of the Garden of Eden that same evening and they spent an exceedingly unprofitable night in the fog, without a blanket, and the next morning Eve was sort of trying to make up to Adam for this thing she had brought on to them both, and she sort of snuggled up to him and said, 'Adam, I see by the paper --' He said, 'Wait a minute, honey, wait a minute. Do I see by the paper? Oh, yes, don't forget, since yesterday afternoon I am wise.'"

I think it was a rather nice parable in regard to a good deal of this peace talk we have been seeing lately.

Q Mr. President, is there any more word regarding these tankers and submarines in the Caribbean?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Have they been identified yet?

THE PRESIDENT: Not for the Press. (Laughter)

Q (interposing) Do you think --

THE PRESIDENT: They are not American. That is as far as we can go.

Q Do you think they are handling oil for Mexico?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not got any news on that.

Q Mr. President, the London Times stated editorially last week that the problem of enforcing the safety zone provision of the Pan-American Declaration might constitute an act or acts of war. Can you tell us what the United States' position is?

THE PRESIDENT: You see, the trouble with all those questions, asked publicly and privately in a great many forms, is that they are all essentially "if" questions. You cannot get away from that fact. They are all "if" questions, so I cannot answer them.

Q I believe the moral of your Adam and Eve story is that you do not think much of the mediation story as inspired?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I do not think much of the press story.

Q Which press story is it? Seriously, there was one from Berlin. Is that the one which you refer to?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q What did you think of the story this morning that no offer to make you a peacemaker had really appeared on the horizon?

THE PRESIDENT: I did not see that. Who was guilty of that?

(There was no answer.)

Q I have a new question, Mr. President, I think. I have often heard you speak, not always complimentarily, of columnists. There is a growing interest in Mrs. Roosevelt's column and I wondered if you would express an opinion on that? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: It was not longer ago than this morning that she

(referring to Mrs. Roosevelt) told me not to.

Q I was afraid of that.

Q Are you giving any attention to the international meanderings of William R. Davis, an oil broker of New York?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know anything about it except what I have seen in the papers, all kinds of stories. I believe he is back in the country.

Q Does your story about peace exhaust your readiness to discuss peace negotiations today?

THE PRESIDENT: I think so, Fred (Mr. Frederic William Wile).

Q Have you received any offers or overtures?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Are any plans being made on this Smithsonian exhibit as a result of your talk with Dr. Abbot?

THE PRESIDENT: No, but if the Washington papers want to discuss it --

Q (interposing) Do I understand that he wants a continuation of the $25,000., or was there more?

THE PRESIDENT: No, just the $25,000. for this research that is going on, research into some form of gas.

Q That had nothing to do with your story about the lack of room?

THE PRESIDENT: No, he came in to talk about $25,000. and before we got through we were talking in terms of millions. (Laughter)

Q Was that on the matter of exhibiting?

THE PRESIDENT: Exhibits, yes. This is really only Washington interest. As you know, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission for a great many years, oh, eight or ten years, has been advocating the development of East Capitol Street for comparatively

small, specialized groups of exhibits, like the Shakespeare collection and the wonderful collection of medical books that belongs to the Army, all kinds of memorabilia and manuscripts and things of that kind, probably the finest in the world. Following that out, the Smithsonian owns a great many specialized collections that ought to be shown as separate collections instead of being crowded in in a general, big museum. I was talking to Dr. Abbot about what kinds of collections these were. For instance, they have a very wonderful American Indian exhibit, which is all crowded; there is no space to show it at the present time and it is displayed in the 1870 manner, which is not a very -- it is not up to date at all. We talked of the possibility of working out near the Capitol a series of small buildings, from the Library of Congress and the Shakespeare Library down East Capitol Street so that people could go to an individual exhibit hall and see a specialized collection.

Well, that is as far as it has got but it is a nice idea to play with.

Q To recall to your mind -- do you remember you had spoken on one occasion, about a year or so ago, with respect to the Army Medical Museum, which was the best thing on earth. Well, nothing ever happened in the Budget on that.

THE PRESIDENT: Wasn't it authorized in a bill but not appropriated for?

Q There was an authorization, or a start for authorization.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Well, we are going to put it in the Budget just as soon as we feel we can and on that, of course, some of the

Army people wanted to go out and lobby and we did not feel it was modern books and that there ought to be a special collection on East Capitol Street.

Q Assistant Secretary Johnson made a speech in which he said this country should have an Army of at least 600,000 men. Is that an Administration view?

THE PRESIDENT: It is not very far off. Of course you have to remember that that would include the National Guard and the organized Reserves and that it is not a very large figure over the present Army. If you add up the existing Army and the National Guard and the organized Reserves, you come to nearly that figure.

Q What part of that would be the regular Army?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, that I do not know.

Q Mr. President, could you clarify this Government's attitude toward the Pan-American neutrality matter? There seems to be a lot of confusion about it.

THE PRESIDENT: If you will quit making guesses you will see that it will work out all right. That is the easiest way I can put it. In other words, there were twenty-one republics that all agreed unanimously and without dissent to a statement of certain principles. I would recommend stopping there. They are all agreed on this Declaration. The minute you go beyond that, you start asking yourself an "if" question. It makes it hard to write a story but you have to stick to the principles that were enunciated at that conference.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #588,
Executive Offices of the White House,
October 13, 1939, 10.53 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: How are you?

Q (Mr. Russell Young) Not so good.

THE PRESIDENT: Go away for a week.

Q (Mr. Belair) He just came back from a vacation.

THE PRESIDENT: Go down to Asheville and see Mac (Mr. McIntyre). Spend a week down there.

Q How's Mac getting along?

THE PRESIDENT: Fine.

Q That is pretty country this time of the year.

THE PRESIDENT: Perfect. No, really, you ought to do that. Nothing should stop you. Earl (Mr. Godwin), I will appoint you a committee of one to take him down to Asheville for a week.

Q (Mr. Godwin) I wish I could.

THE PRESIDENT: He needs it. That <u>will</u> hang on (tapping chest).

Q (Mr. Godwin) Did you say you heard from Mac favorably?

THE PRESIDENT: He is getting on very well. The spots are really filling out and healing over.

Q Would you like us to bring that out in this Conference?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not believe I have got anything in particular.

Q Mr. President, there was a gentleman from Illinois, I think he was a Republican National Committeeman, presumably to see you. Is there any news in that?

THE PRESIDENT: No, just a friend; that is all. Not talking politics.

Q According to dispatches from Berlin, Hitler expects you to settle the European hash. Anything to say about that?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Are you going to make any move?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing to say on it, Constantine (Mr. Brown).

Q Any news from Russia in reply to the representations?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet. That is why, at this particular time, I am not giving out the actual text. I can tell you -- what will I say? -- the chronology of it, that on Monday of this week we all began to worry about the situation in the Baltic because it looked as if it might be heading towards an extension of wars. On Tuesday several (representatives of) Scandinavian nations, as you know, saw the Secretary (of State) and some of them came in to tell me that they also were very much concerned. There was, at no time, any suggestion of joint action on our part with them. That was Tuesday. Wednesday -- I drafted Wednesday morning a personal message to President Kalinin and waited until the Secretary of State got back Wednesday afternoon, around 2.00 o'clock, and we edited it a little and it still remained a purely personal message from me to President Kalinin, a message which, as the State Department said yesterday, expressed the hope that nothing would be done which would disturb the peaceful relations in the Baltic or the independence of Finland. That was sent off on Wednesday afternoon and, of course, obviously, it being intended merely as an expression of our interest and hope, it was not given to the Press -- I know you, all of you, ninety-nine per cent of you, will

understand why -- because the action had not been completed. It was not until Thursday, yesterday, that the message was actually delivered and I am not making the text of it public at this time because I do not want to do anything that would let it be assumed or construed as being, in any way, a pressure move on our part. That is the easiest way of putting it. Now you have the gist of the message and pretty soon you will probably have the text of the message.

Q Mr. President, this message does entail an answer, sir, does it not?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, there will undoubtedly be an acknowledgment, at least.

Q Mr. President, are you to receive the delegates or the officers of the International [Intergovernmental] Governmental Committee on Refugees next week?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. They are coming in on the seventeenth, Tuesday.

Q That is a change of date?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, because one of them does not get in until Monday, Monday afternoon. I am having them to lunch at the White House on Tuesday. That might be called the opening meeting -- the lunch will be -- and then, at the end of the lunch, I will probably read them a little something, a message of some kind that you will have copies of, and then, after the lunch, they will go over to the State Department and go into session.

Q Getting back to this message, Ambassador Steinhardt was with Molotoff (foreign Commissar V. M. Molotoff of Moscow) for over an hour. Anything additional to add?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Just presentation of the message?

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THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, do you think -- I am quoting from a speech made yesterday -- that the Monroe Doctrine can be interpreted to include "the prohibition of penetration of foreign nations through propaganda or otherwise in this Hemisphere"?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I do not think there is any answer to that.

Q Do you have anything on reports that Italian tankers are fueling German submarines off the coast?

THE PRESIDENT: There is no news on that and I suppose that is a very good example of our real, honest efforts to tell the Press everything that we can, properly. Necessarily, and again I know that ninety-nine per cent of you will understand it, it means that we are not giving to the Press unverified rumors. Now, there are all kinds of rumors that come in off our coasts and from the West Indies and Central and South America every day and we do not give them out unless we believe that they have been fully verified. Now, there was a rumor on this Italian tanker thing, the story I read this morning, and it is not in verifiable form and therefore I have said nothing about it and I cannot say anything about it. It is a very good illustration. The stories that we have given out about the non-American submarines and other ships are stories that we believe to have been fully verified. A great many of them come up. A fisherman comes in and says, "I saw a submarine." Well, we do not give that out as a fact. I am trying to confine our statements to things we really, honestly know about. The same thing, Earl (Mr. Godwin) had one this morning.

Q We have a story from two sources which I would like to ask if it has

come to your attention. Two Members of Congress, Joe Starnes and somebody else said this morning that six submarines were operating in the Caribbean. Now, have you heard that one? Has it come to you in any shape or form?

THE PRESIDENT: Not in any shape, manner or form.

Q When we saw you last on Tuesday you had no word in direct manner or form from Berlin. Is that still true?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that is true.

Q Governor Troy of Alaska resigned, effective October fifteenth. Alaska would like to know if he will continue to serve until Dr. Gruening is confirmed.

THE PRESIDENT: I sent Governor Troy a telegram yesterday, asking him if he would be willing to have me withhold acceptance of his resignation and to continue on as Governor until his successor gets there.

Q Mr. President, do you have a successor for Dr. Gruening in mind?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, yesterday Senator La Follette suggested that we use part of our supply of idle gold, not only to make direct investments in Latin America but also to provide local credit facilities through stabilization of their banking systems. Can you comment on that suggestion?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it is a matter which has been under study for three years and is definitely under, not only continued study but I can say, in the case of one or two countries, that it has almost reached a negotiation stage. I cannot say anything more because it has not actually reached a negotiation stage.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #589,
Executive Offices of the White House,
October 17, 1939, 4.10 P.M.

(Captain Patterson of the New York Daily News was present at this Conference as a guest of the President.)

THE PRESIDENT: How is everybody? How are you feeling, Russ (Mr. Young)?

Q (Mr. Young) A little better.

THE PRESIDENT: You are disobeying orders.

Q (Mr. Young) Earl (Mr. Godwin) is responsible.

THE PRESIDENT: Why didn't you take care of him the way I told you to?

Q (Mr. Godwin) We could not get a White House car.

THE PRESIDENT: Did you hear that, Steve (Mr. Early)? He couldn't get that White House car to take Russ Young down to Asheville.

MR. EARLY: Not unless a certain man, now in New York, approves.

THE PRESIDENT: Who approves? (Laughter)

Got any news for me from the Middle West?

Q (Mr. Ulric Bell) I just saw Happy (Governor Chandler), if that is what you mean.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, any questions?

Q Mr. President, have you received any reply from the President of Russia yet?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, it is being put on the mimeograph and Steve (Mr. Early) will give it to you on the way out.

Q Anything in it?

THE PRESIDENT: No, it speaks for itself. It is all right.

Q Mr. President, your remarks at the luncheon today have in them, "Not

one million but ten million or twenty million men, women and children," which would be, if we take the maximum, pretty nearly the largest migration in history. Is it your opinion that the results of this war will affect that many refugees?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, no; not necessarily an opinion that it will but there is always the possibility after every major war, as I said there, of so many individuals and families having their roots torn up that they want to seek life in some new place and, therefore, it is time to begin studying what new places there are that are not filled up already -- as we all know, it is a matter that has been given a good deal of study already -- in other words, areas that are inhabitable by white races on several different continents, that have not got many inhabitants in them at the present time. But the essential thing to consider is that we cannot just take some given area on the map and say, "This looks all right," until we put engineering study into the locality. By engineering I do not mean engineering in the narrow sense, I mean economic engineering, social engineering, transportation, crops, soil surveys, health surveys, et cetera and so on. And, incidentally, financial surveys to see how much it will cost per capita to get people there and, if people go there, as emigrants from other countries, how long it will take them to be self-sustaining, and how much of the money that is invested could come back to the people that put up the capital.

Those are all things that take time and that is why I suggested that this Intergovernmental Committee should begin work on those studies now.

Q What was the reaction to this suggestion?

THE PRESIDENT: I think they were very much interested in it. There has been some preliminary work done but, of course, the outbreak of the war itself a month and a half ago turned the thoughts of a great many people to war loans instead of reconstruction loans and because any war calls for reconstruction after it is over, I thought we might just as well begin doing our homework first.

Q Can you tell us anything about Government participation?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Government financial participation?

THE PRESIDENT: It has not got to that stage. I think probably, without much question, that in the neutral nations alone we ought to be able to raise enough money privately to pay for the cost of the engineering studies.

Q How about the relocation of those in Europe now? The refugees that are now scattered --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Of course, as I said in the address today, that is a relatively minor subject that ought to be taken care of by private funds within the next year or two.

Q Mr. President, would you care to comment on the probable effect of a rise in steel prices, either in our national economy or war policy?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think there is any news on that.

Q Mr. President, in the last week you have seen Senator McAdoo a couple of times. Can you tell us anything about your discussions with him?

THE PRESIDENT: We talked about steamship lines.

Q About the neutrality bill and the shipping provisions?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Of course he was very anxious to make it possible for those lines to continue around the world.

Q Has anything been asked or have you given any endorsement to any modification?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Can you tell us anything about copper prices? You said some weeks back you were watching those and I think copper prices have gone up since then.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think they have, have they? What is copper selling at?

Q I am not sure.

Q About twelve and a half cents.

THE PRESIDENT: I think it was about twelve and a half cents when we talked about it before, therefore there is no further news at this time.

Q Mr. President, in 1937 you had a supplemental Budget estimate. I think last year you said the defense program would knock that out. Will there be any supplemental estimate this year?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, there is bound to be a deficiency estimate, of course, in January to take care of the enlargement of the Army and Navy by nearly one hundred thousand men and the commissioning of ships. That is not part of the 1941 Budget.

Q The 1940 Budget.

Q Mr. President, do you think we need a two-ocean Navy?

THE PRESIDENT: It is a beautiful slogan. Just like I am awfully glad that Captain Patterson, who is sitting here behind me, about once

every Monday morning ends up his editorial saying, "Two ships for one." It is all right, it is a perfectly pious idea but, when you come down to a definition of a two-ocean Navy, it is too simple. It is too simple because the Lord only knows if we had a two-ocean Navy whether we would keep one Navy in each ocean or whether we would put the whole Navy in one ocean. It is a thing that the greatest of the strategists in the world could not possibly prophesy on. So, really what we need is a completely adequate Navy for all probable defense needs. I suppose that is the easiest way to define it.

Q Do you consider, sir, that the large naval expansion program will result in a completely adequate Navy?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, there again, the words, "completely adequate," change from time to time. I do not know. Each year we have to make new plans.

Q Mr. President, a question I want to ask you which is very dear to your heart: How did you get along with the plans for the post office at Hyde Park?

THE PRESIDENT: Very well; coming along all right.

Q Have you got a site?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think we have six possible sites and looking for more.

Q Any ideas on the building? Are you going to sketch it for them, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes. (Laughter)

Q Have you any comment on the current hearing on the Argentine trade agreement?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not followed them at all.

Q Mr. President, have you approved the recommendation of the Planning Committee that the White House conference on "Children in a Democracy" be moved up to January?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it is to be held.

MR. EARLY: It is in the letter to Miss Perkins and she will release it.

THE PRESIDENT: It is in the letter to Miss Perkins and she will release it.

Q Can you tell us whether that was done on account of the war, whether the advancement of the date was because of the war situation?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. I think Miss Perkins suggested to me that if it was held in January it would give them a chance to get out a preliminary report, which is better than waiting until April. I do not think the war had anything to do with it.

Q Your contemplated trip to Hyde Park this week end, is it definite now, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Only definite in the sense that I will decide about five hours beforehand. In other words, I am on call and if everything is quiet I will go up over the week end.

Q Going up on Friday?

THE PRESIDENT: Friday.

Q Mr. President, is there any news of interest in the visit of Mr. Delano's National Resources Planning Board, or whatever they call it? The Capital Planning Commission, or whatever it is?

THE PRESIDENT: It is the National Resources Board and we were going over their current work.

Just to give you a simple illustration: This is tied up gen-

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erally with the reorganization plans that have already been accepted by the Congress and any other future reorganization plans. It is a matter of policy. A very good example of it is, just the other day I consolidated two boards, interdepartmental boards, on the question of power policy. We had had a study made for defense power policy. That has been completed. Now we have amalgamated those two committees, which will remain as interdepartmental committees on power policy. They will do all the spade work. They will not have any member of the National Resources Board on that committee. There will be merely an observer from the National Resources Committee. Then when a report with a recommendation of national power policy comes in to me, I will transmit it to the National Resources Committee or Board, which is under me -- it is in the White House -- for them to study it and report on whether the recommendations conform to the long range national power policy. In other words, we are thinking not only of the immediate needs of the coming year or two years but whether they tie in, the recommendations, with the ten-year or twenty-year power needs of the Nation.

Q You did not say what the second committee was?

THE PRESIDENT: The Defense Power Committee, which was under Louis Johnson, and then the regular interdepartmental Power Policy Committee, which is a peacetime organization.

Q Has the War Resources Board made its report yet?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Louis Johnson is coming in tomorrow.

Q Will he have a report then?

THE PRESIDENT: I think he will have a preliminary outline but not the

final report.

Q Has the foreign purchase of strategic materials stopped as a result of your advice?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of.

Q I mean in the United States, I mean the purchases in the United States.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, you mean -- yes, I think so, as far as I know. In other words, I have not had any complaints in the last couple of weeks.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, sir.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #590,
While the President was seated in his automobile,
directly upon leaving the Presidential Special
Train, at Hyde Park Station, New York,
October 20, 1939, 8.40 A.M.

Q Mr. President, there has been a question from all parts about the Submarine Proclamation, upon what basis the differentiation is made between submarines and merchant vessels?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, is that all? It is under the language of the Act, that is, the Neutrality Act. It says, "Submarines or merchant ships." There are two different categories. That is the Act.

Q Well, is there any possibility of similar restrictions being put on surface ships?

THE PRESIDENT: They should come up to the surface and show the periscope?

Q I mean surface ships.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think the two are analogous. You are trying to add apples and pears. You see what I mean? They are different things.

Q Have you had any indication that other of the twenty-one American republics might follow suit in connection with the Panama Declaration?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q I came a little late. Does the Act give you the right to differentiate between commercial and war submarines?

THE PRESIDENT: It just uses the word, "submarines," that is all. It refers to submarines and then it refers to merchant vessels. I

have forgotten whether it says armed merchant vessels or just plain merchant vessels.

Q Is that in different sections?

THE PRESIDENT: No, right in the same section. You have got it in your pocket.

Q I have one too, but I had forgotten.

THE PRESIDENT: I was saying before you came up (to the car), it is two different things, like you cannot apply the same rule to apples that you can to pears.

Q Are you going to St. James Church this week end for this Bible dedication?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, in fact we have it (the Bible) on the train with us.

Q Have you any other special plans over the week end?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I have a blessed thing.

Q Any callers, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think we have a single thing. I am dining out tomorrow night but that is only family.

Q Can you tell us where?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think -- I am afraid we are going to have a very, very difficult week end to write up and I do not know what to do about it. But, honestly, I haven't got a thing. If anything turns up, I will telephone Bill (Mr. Hassett) and you can come out.

Q You turned up a submarine the last time we were up here.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Have you any more submarines?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I am telling you of all the submarines that are

substantiated. I am not telling you the rumors.

Q On the submarines, would that (the Proclamation) apply to the three-mile limit or would that extend?

THE PRESIDENT: No, that applies to the old three-mile limit.

Q The rule that our territorial waters extend as far as our interests does not apply?

THE PRESIDENT: Not in this case. In the case of rum running, it ran out about 150 miles because that was the distance. In other words, it is perfectly silly to try to get a definite three-mile or twenty-mile limit or thousand-mile limit. It depends on the circumstances under which the limit is created. In this case it is under the definite old international law of three-mile limit. In the case of rum running, six years ago, we fixed it at (beyond) such distance off the coast as rum runners could lie to and send their liquor ashore in small boats or small boats could take liquor to the shore from the ships that were lying to. There has never been any fixed rule. When it comes to a question of patrol, we will go out as far as necessary for the patrol. I think you can all write good stories on that. We ought not to be bound by the rule of three miles for everything. Territorial limits are as far as necessary for national safety, according to the specific case involving national safety and neutrality. In this case it is three miles. In the case of rum running, as I say, it was 150 miles and in the case of patrolling it is further than that and, roughly, within the limits laid down by the Panama Conference.

Now, you have the whole story. It is a good story for you.

Q In connection with this section about enjoining all officers of the

United States to enforce this Proclamation, have any special orders been issued to the Navy or Coast Guard, telling them what they should do about enforcement, telling them how far they should go?

THE PRESIDENT: I would not -- no. I imagine the Navy and the Coast Guard, probably the Army too because there are Army planes, you know, I imagine they get copies.

Q Copies of the Proclamation?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that is a standing rule. All Proclamations which may concern any department in any way.

Q This is very "iffy": What happens if the submarine comes in very much submerged?

THE PRESIDENT: Very much submerged? You mean half seas over? (Laughter)

Q That is the point I was bringing out, but what orders have been issued to enforce it?

THE PRESIDENT: Just the Proclamation. It will be just the Proclamation that will be sent out.

I see what you are driving at. I do not know. Of course that would be the discretion of the Commanding Officer.

Q We were thinking out loud on the subject last night, Mr. President, and we figured that under certain circumstances accidents might happen -- off the record, I mean.

THE PRESIDENT: No; practically not.

Q We were thinking about the Canal. That is one of those things.

THE PRESIDENT: Of course in the Canal (Panama Canal) you run up against an entirely different sort of rule.

Q Or at the mouth of the Canal?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q We were speaking of possibilities of getting in the mouth of the Canal?

THE PRESIDENT: It would not do any particular harm and, as soon as she came in the three-mile jurisdiction of the Canal, she would have people come on board to take her through. I do not think there is any possibility of any danger on that.

MR. REYNOLDS: Thank you, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: If anything turns up this morning I will let you know.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #591,
Executive Offices of the White House,
October 25, 1939, 4.10 P.M.

Q (Mr. Godwin) How do you do.

THE PRESIDENT: How is he (meaning Mr. Russell Young) behaving?

Q (Mr. Godwin) Well, we were talking about drinking out there.

THE PRESIDENT: He ought to know he cannot do that. (Turning to Mr. Young) You can't do it yet; not yet. You have got to stay on the wagon for quite a while.

Q (Mr. Godwin) I was on the right side.

THE PRESIDENT: You represented the W.C.T.U. and he represented Hennessy 5-Star? Right?

No, you have got to stay on the wagon until Thanksgiving. I put it a week early for that reason. I put it a week early on account of Russ.

Q (Mr. Young) Which Thanksgiving?

THE PRESIDENT: Your Thanksgiving, the twenty-fifth.

Q (Mr. Young) That is fair; that is all right.

THE PRESIDENT: That is the most engaging little gadget. (Referring to a very small watt hour meter on his desk)

MR. EARLY: See what the war has done to John O'Donnell. (Showing the President some pictures)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think I have got any news at all. I suppose you will ask about the (steamship) CITY OF FLINT. There is nothing I can tell you except that we heard from Ambassador Steinhardt and the gist of what he reported was that they don't know all of the

facts yet in Moscow and the Russian Government is ascertaining, and so are we, what the facts are, so we cannot say much about it until we get the facts.

Q Do you know where the first report came from?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not.

Q Have you any clues as to the crew of the ship, the American crew?

THE PRESIDENT: No; have not heard a thing.

Q The Maritime Commission does not divulge the source and I wondered whether you had something on that that was of interest?

THE PRESIDENT: I heard it around lunch time yesterday and I could not tell you where I heard about it. It may have been the Maritime Commission.

Q Do you have the authority under existing laws to order American ships away from European war zones?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, is a ship owned by the Government in the same status as when privately owned?

THE PRESIDENT: Practically, because it is a leased ship. It is -- practically nearly all of those ships are Government financed ships.

Q Mr. President, there have been some reports from Canada that Premier Hepburn, of Ontario, has changed his attitude to one of friendliness to the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence, and that seems to revive hope that something will be done on that treaty. Is there anything you can tell us?

THE PRESIDENT: I have nothing at all. I had not heard that. All I can say is, I hope so.

Q Under any circumstances, do you hope they will get the CITY OF FLINT back?

THE PRESIDENT: I hope so.

Q I hate to ask another California question, but I am compelled to. Various people in California are quoting you as being in favor of an oil control bill known as the Atkinson Bill, which will be voted on this coming election. Is there anything you can tell us about it? Did you say you were in favor of it?

THE PRESIDENT: I did.

Q Does that go to the whole bill or the general idea?

THE PRESIDENT: The principle I think the bill will establish. In other words, it is an implementation, a further implementation of the effort to take care of our oil production problem through the state compact method because you will remember back in 1935, along there, obviously somebody had to do something about oil control and I made it perfectly clear then that I hoped it could be done successfully through the state compact method and therefore it should be given the widest opportunity to prove itself a success because, obviously, if it did not prove itself a success, the cooperation between the states, somebody would have to do it and that would mean the Federal Government and I did not want to have the Federal Government doing it.

Q Mr. President, there are more rumors around town than a dog has fleas about changes in the Cabinet. Can you tell us anything about it?

THE PRESIDENT: No, except I suppose it is just one of those annual performances.

Q There are no changes contemplated?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q The Department of Commerce and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics have predicted a slight recession in 1940, a business recession. Has anything like that come to you?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, no; only what I read in the columnists.

Q Harry Hopkins gave out a statement and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics gave out a statement.

THE PRESIDENT: Did they both say the same thing?

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Did they? That is pretty good.

Q Mr. President, will you take any action on Mayor La Guardia's request of yesterday for that Brooklyn-Battery Bridge?

THE PRESIDENT: I have referred it to the Secretary of War for comment and recommendation.

Q What was the recommendation?

THE PRESIDENT: I referred it for comment and recommendation.

Q Mr. President, there are more stories out that there is another $5,000,000,000. lend-and-spend program in the making. Is there anything you can tell us about that?

THE PRESIDENT: That? No.

I know what you are talking about. I had five members of the Senate and five members from the House in this morning on the question of helping the farm population in the two areas where there was a somewhat difficult situation which ought not to be exaggerated, floods in the South and droughts in certain portions of the West. What we have been trying to do is to avoid getting

any special legislation to take care of it and we think we have found a way of doing it. Under the old Disaster Loan Corporation there is still a substantial balance in that appropriation which goes back to what? -- the time of the Ohio flood, I think, and then there was some more money appropriated to it at the time of the New England hurricane. The Disaster Loan Corporation had quite a good balance left which we think can be used for lending purposes in these two areas. Then, in addition to that, we think we have, although I have not talked to the Director of the Budget, $5,000,000. which has been put aside as a "kitty." I could not actually tell you the fund; I think it is the Commodity Credit Corporation or the Surplus Commodity Credit Corporation.

Q It is the Farm Security that has $5,000,000. and one of the others has $4,000,000.

THE PRESIDENT: It is one of those, I could not tell you which, and, with that, we will be able to provide further loans. Then, in regard to -- those loans will go mostly for the repairing of damages and the buying of cattle feed, livestock feed, for over the winter. In the southern area, for instance, they need principally corn for livestock feed and up in Western New York and some other places they need hay. Well, that will take care of damage and the food for the livestock and we think that the Surplus Commodity Corporation can take care of the human beings' food problem out of their regular funds, out of the regular surplus commodities which they have on hand.

Q How many people are affected by this, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I could not tell you; I do not know.

Q Are these funds to be administered and the loans made under existing setup?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q You do not need new legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: Without any more legislation or new appropriation.

It will probably leak out anyway so I will tell you, off the record, a story. I do not think it can be used because it refers to two members of other branches of the Government. About a week ago a certain member of the House of Congress came in and said, "Mr. President, it is a terrible situation down there in Alabama. People are starving. The livestock, they cannot feed it; they will have to kill it; they won't have anything to feed on over the winter and it means during the spring they will starve. It is very widespread."

I said, "How widespread?" And he said, "Twenty-five counties in Alabama affected and nine in Missippi."

He went out and an hour later a legislator from Mississippi came in and he said, "This is a terrible situation because people won't have enough feed for the winter and they won't be able to keep the livestock alive." I said, "How widespread is it?" And he said, "It is bad; twenty-five counties in Mississippi and nine in Alabama." (Laughter)

So when the boys came in this morning, I told them not to get their stories crossed. It is all right as long as they stick to the same line of talk.

Q May I return to the oil? Is your remark to be interpreted as an indorsement of this particular (Atkinson) Bill?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q You think the compact method has proved a success?

THE PRESIDENT: Not wholly a success, no, but they all feel that it can still be made a complete success.

Q Mr. President, we understand that after the Senate gets through with neutrality you will probably send up some nominations. Is that right?

THE PRESIDENT: I doubt it.

Q No nominations? That knocks out the other question, whether you will send up something else.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Wait a minute before you go. You did not ask me a question about it. I have got a gadget in my hand that is an interesting illustration of cooperation between all the power producing and power distributing agencies of the United States, that is, Government and private. This happens to be a thing called a -- some of us who rode bicycles will remember the cyclometer on the front wheel. It is just a development of the cyclometer. That (holding up the watt hour meter) is an electricity meter. That is all there is of it. We got the idea through the R.E.A. from the Ontario Hydroelectric people.

The present meters that go into the small homes and farm houses are about three times the size and cost to install about $10. whereas this costs $5. That is all it is. It is complete and it is the simplest thing you ever saw. I think it costs $4. and another dollar to install it.

Then, we are working on another thing. This will save $5.

on the overhead and we are working on another thing and that is to let the honest farmer read his own meter, (laughter) thereby reducing the inspection -- instead of once a month, making it once every six months.

Q Who inspects the farmer?

THE PRESIDENT: I say, only once every six months. The result will be that the cost of meter-reading, sending out bills, will be reduced from -- wait a minute, I have got it right here -- from fifteen cents a month to three cents a month.

Q The cost of reading?

THE PRESIDENT: The cost of reading will be reduced from fifteen cents to three cents. That is a straight saving out of the consumer's pocket.

Q Is there any check on the farmer?

THE PRESIDENT: We will check him once every six months.

Q He does not stay honest?

THE PRESIDENT: No. He has to be honest for six months.

Q Won't this increase technological unemployment? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: It is a rather nice thing, interesting. It looks just like a speedometer.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #592,
Executive Offices of the White House,
October 27, 1939, 10.45 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: What has happened to your patient (Mr. Russell Young)?

Is he sick again?

Q (Mr. Godwin) He is not in today.

Q (Mr. Reynolds) He is keeping his feet dry this morning.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't believe I have anything this morning.

Q Mr. President, your calling list shows Jerome Frank, Leon Henderson and Solicitor General Jackson are down for a conference this morning. Will that have any bearing on prices and price trends?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think so. I have forgotten what it is about. It is two weeks that they were going to come in and now they are coming in.

Q Have you heard anything about the CITY OF FLINT yet?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet; not enough to say anything on.

Q How is it that the Ambassador (Mr. Steinhardt) could not find out from the Russian Government until now, and he has apparently not found out yet, when, where and to whom it should be released?

THE PRESIDENT: It is a long ways from Moscow to Murmansk.

Q There is a telephone.

THE PRESIDENT: I am not sufficiently familiar with conditions -- communications.

Q Mr. President, early last month you wrote Commissioner Lorton of the International Joint Commission a letter in which you asked for his resignation and told him about your plans to reorganize

that Commission. Has anything further been done along that line?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, the thing is nearly through. What I wrote him was that (reading)

> "Bearing in mind that the principal purposes of the reorganization Act of 1939 are to economize expenditures and to increase efficiency, I have reached the conclusion that under existing conditions, in which should be included the possibility that the St. Lawrence Waterway --"

I guess that is why you asked the question, Jim (Mr. Wright).

> "-- may come up for further consideration in the near future, steps should be taken to reduce the budget of the Commission and at the same time make available to the Commission specialized knowledge on certain technical subjects. The one solution to these points is the replacement of a member of the Commission by a high official of the Government who would receive no additional compensation other than his present salary and at the same time would be technically qualified along the lines I have in mind."

Well, we are carrying that out a little further. I did not know -- I did not ask for it, but my old friend, Governor Bartlett of New Hampshire, heard about this and agreed fully with the purpose of it, the reorganization, and he also has tendered his resignation and I understand that late in winter or early spring former Senator Stanley will do the same thing, so that we will have three Government officials on the Commission instead of three outside men, thereby saving three salaries and also making it possible for us to take care, a little more than we do now, of the technical end, the engineering and things like that.

Q Has that Commission performed any duties in the last ten years?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes; oh, yes.

Q Mr. President, I am a little bit confused as to just how the St.

Lawrence figures in this. As I understand it, it is still in the hands of the State Department. Is that right?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Then where does the International Joint Commission come in on the St. Lawrence?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you know a boundary is not just earth; it is water, too.

Q Solely water, as far as this is concerned.

THE PRESIDENT: For instance, not far from Buffalo, there is always a question of just how much running there is on one side of the river and how much on the other.

Q I have heard about that.

THE PRESIDENT: That really is the same thing -- at Niagara Falls and further down the river and the same question in the Detroit River, and up at the Sault (Sainte Marie), all connected with the boundary.

Q Can you tell me whether the negotiations between the United States and Canada on this treaty are near termination now?

THE PRESIDENT: I would not say that; still very preliminary stages.

Q All these stories in recent days --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Well, let us put it this way: that while it was in a more or less dormant position for about a year, we have taken it out and dusted it off.

Q Is it necessary that it (the treaty) be ratified by the United States before it is acted on by Canada, or would it be likely that Canada would act on it first?

THE PRESIDENT: You mean after the treaty is signed on the question of ratification?

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: I imagine either country can act first.

Q But the theory, apparently, at the time it went to the Senate the last time was that the United States was to act first?

THE PRESIDENT: It was, at that time. You can never tell what it will be the next time.

Q Can you tell us what three Government officials will be used?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know.

Q Does the Commission remain in existence?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes; absolutely.

Q Just a matter of personnel?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. For example, one of the Assistant Secretaries of State might be made also a member of the Commission, in which case he can only draw one salary.

Q Have you the names of those three?

THE PRESIDENT: Eugene Lorton of Tulsa, former Governor John H. Bartlett of New Hampshire and former Senator Augustus O. Stanley of Kentucky.

Q Mr. President, there have been some stories that the national defense budget for the next year, 1941, will be over $2,000,000,000.

THE PRESIDENT: I could not give you figures or write a story because, frankly, we have not considered it. We have not got to that. The only part of the defense budget being taken up at the present time is the normal maintenance and operations budget, not of new construction or additional people.

Q Mr. President, there has been a good deal of discussion about the public debts of Latin-American countries held by private individuals in this country -- that is, they are dollar bonded debts -- as an

obstacle to the carrying out of the Good Neighbor policy as now contemplated. Would you care to say, sir, if you favor any consideration of the possibility of scaling down of the dollar debt of the Latin-American countries?

THE PRESIDENT: The public debt to American private citizens? Is that what you mean?

Q Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Of course that goes back to 1933 when we gave Government blessing to them -- what was it? a bondholders' committee? It had some fancy name.

Q Bondholders' Protective Committee.

THE PRESIDENT: That is it. They have been working along and, frankly, I do not think they have got very far. That is about the only thing I can say. I am rather disappointed in the success of their operations. I could not give you any details; that is only an impression.

Q Do you mean, sir, by the progress that might be expected of them?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, the remarks of your Secretary (Mr. Early) with respect to Wallace's speech in San Francisco, I wonder if those remarks apply with equal force to the speeches and articles of the Secretary of the Interior?

THE PRESIDENT: Don't you really think we had better confine ourselves to news? (Laughter)

Q That kind of deters me. (Laughter) I was interested in a story in Fred Wile's column the other day about a poem to Jack Garner and one line is, "He is riding high and he is riding straight, and he

is headed for the White House gate." I wanted to know which direction? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, off the record, you remind me of President Coolidge's remark about Senator Borah when he pointed him out riding in Rock Creek Park. He said, "That is the most interesting sight in Washington. He is going in the same direction as his horse." (Laughter)

Q Do we have to keep that off the record?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that is an old chestnut.

Q Can you tell us anything about the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees? There is some suggestion that you have modified your stand on the refugee question.

THE PRESIDENT: I think they are working on it. Whether they have adopted a Resolution on it or not, I do not know. They were talking about it yesterday and they are coming in to tea this afternoon at five o'clock to say, "Good-by."

Q Did you confer with Mr. Van Zeeland (Paul Van Zeeland) on the possible sale of raw materials to Belgium?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, are you any closer to your appointment of a Canadian Minister?

THE PRESIDENT: I could not say yes or no. I do not know.

Q Would it be a minister or ambassador?

THE PRESIDENT: It has to be a minister.

Q Mr. President, has Mr. FitzGerald of Connecticut been in to see you?

THE PRESIDENT: No -- I think so, yes. He came in the day before yesterday -- I thought you were talking about a Congressman; you mean

old Davey, an old friend of mine?

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Sure. He came in yesterday to say, "How do." I hadn't seen him for over a year.

Q A number of industrialists have made statements recently about war profits and they differ as to the possibilities of steady recovery and the effect of the spurt in prices on a boomlet. Would you care to comment on any of these statements?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that is sort of vague. I think we all want -- industrialists and everybody else -- stabilized prosperity but without the increase of prices. We want profits but we do not want prices to go up. I think that is all one can say.

Q Anything you can tell us about the publication of names of 500 Government employees who were members or on the mailing list of the American League for Peace and Democracy (referring to the lists given by the Dies Committee) --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I have not read enough of the details of that rather sordid procedure to comment.

Q Mr. President, it is very hard to write that story unless you can use the words "sordid procedure" as a quotation.

THE PRESIDENT: I think you can use that.

Q Can you tell us to what you refer?

THE PRESIDENT: No; I do not think so. I think it is obvious.

Q Mr. President, along the lines of the national defense program, will there be an authorization for new Naval expansion by the next session?

THE PRESIDENT: I was just telling Jim (Mr. Wright) about -- or Pete

(Mr. Brandt) about that. We haven't made up (our minds) yet on anything. We have not got to the point of considering it. They are in the study stage in the departments about the expansion of the Army and Navy and the only thing we are working on is the regular Budget figure for maintenance and operation of the existing force.

I won't be ready on any expansion program until, well, pretty close to the first of January.

Q Is this study of expansion still in the departments?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #593,
Executive Offices of the White House,
October 31, 1939, 4.15 P.M.

Q Good afternoon, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Glad to see you, Charlie (Charles Hamilton).

Where is Russ (Mr. Young)?

Q (Mr. Earl Godwin) He is not well. He just did not want to come out today. Something has got to be done about it.

THE PRESIDENT: I wish he would go down.

Q I think we are going to try to do that because he has got something that just knocks him cold.

THE PRESIDENT: If he would go down to Asheville or some place like that for a week or ten days it would not hurt him at all. He is not one of those fellows that has got to be here for broadcasts three times a day.

Q He has something the matter -- at least he thinks so.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, he had better watch it.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Sorry to have kept you all waiting but I was doing the unusual thing of getting a haircut in office hours, just to prove how quiet things are.

Q May we interview the barber?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes. He is the old White House barber, Mays (John Mays). He has been doing it for Presidents since -- I don't know, John Quincy Adams.

Q Mr. President, there seems to be some doubt in Ohio as to whether your reference to the so-called Ham and Eggs Amendment, the old-

age amendment in California, would apply to the Bigelow Old-Age Pension Amendment in Ohio. Will you comment on that, please?

THE PRESIDENT: I'd suggest -- this is off the record -- you should not ask the question and I will tell you why. I do not know anything about this proposed Ohio law and, therefore, I am not commenting on it. It may be a sound thing and it may not. Now the danger of my commenting on it is that if you write that I have nothing to say about it, it may be the proponents may take advantage and maybe the opponents would take advantage of that. I think the best thing to do would be not to ask the question at all because I cannot answer it. That really is the fact. I don't want to be used by either side on something I don't know about.

Q Do you contemplate a trip to Alaska at an indefinite time in the future?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of.

I suppose that relates to a somewhat wild story that Steve (Mr. Early) showed me about the Army buying a yacht to take me to Alaska. (Laughter) Well, it is one of those stories where the story did not live up to the headlines and I ran it down. The Army did need a boat that could take out surveying parties in Alaska, a boat that was seaworthy enough to get there and, at the same time, comparatively small, small enough to go into inlets and they bought an ex-yacht for that purpose. Then I think the story went on and said that the yacht would be available to the President if he ever went to Alaska. Of course the answer is that if I ever go to Alaska I am going on a 10,000-ton

cruiser. (Laughter)

But I do not have any plans for going there.

Q How about Honolulu?

THE PRESIDENT: How about the Philippines? We might as well go the whole hog. And these boys here in the front row, they would very much like to go to Samoa. They say that is even better. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, do you happen to know about a proposed eleven-state progressive conference that may be held in Salt Lake, maybe shortly after the first of the year, promoted by two gentlemen, Messrs. Littell and Dimock?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I will tell you. Absolutely all I know about it is that last September -- August, they were talking about having, not a political conference but a conference of people of all parties, to talk about liberal government and it was to have been held in October and it was called off. That is the last I had heard of it. I did not even know it had been put back on the calendar and, at that time, it was explained to me that it was a nonpartisan conference to talk about liberal government, social welfare, old-age pensions and things like that. Now that is all -- agricultural problems -- and, so far as I know, as I have heard of, that is the end of it. It must have been August, about the end of August.

Q They did not tell you, sir, that it might be a matter of promoting a third term for the New Deal, if not a third term for yourself?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think that was somebody's invention.

Q Whose invention? (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, was this conference that you have just referred to one that was theoretically scheduled while you were en route to the West Coast?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and I would have gone on condition that it was a wholly nonpartisan conference. That would have been the first week in October but, of course, I would not have gone if it had not been a nonpartisan conference. That is the last I heard of it.

Q Mr. Dies has answered your three-word remark about sordid procedure with a long speech. Have you any comment?

THE PRESIDENT: I am sorry; I was working hard that evening.

Q The Republican Party is making renewed efforts to inject national politics into the local election at Philadelphia. Do you see any national issue --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Is that a statement or a question?

Q I think the record speaks for itself.

THE PRESIDENT: The Philadelphia Record? (Laughter)

Q I was wondering if you felt that there was any national issue involved in that local election?

THE PRESIDENT: I know absolutely nothing about it.

Q Mr. President, last Tuesday you said you hoped we would get back the CITY OF FLINT. A number of things have happened.

THE PRESIDENT: I still hope so. I have no more information than what you have got -- these reports along the Norwegian Coast. We haven't another thing. Actually, we get these reports from the various State Department people on the other side just about the same time you get them and they are exactly along the same lines.

Q I think just possibly, for the sake of the record, no one in speaking of this eleven-state progressive conference -- I don't think anybody has called to your attention or asked you about the manner in which it came to be in the newspapers this morning. I suppose you know there was a letter from John L. Lewis to Governor Olson. Are you aware of that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, but I do not have anything to say.

Q Well, nobody had asked you. (Laughter)

Q A short wave radio message said last night that it was established that you had sent a second message to the Finns asking to be informed on the progress of negotiations?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q The U. P. had a story there.

THE PRESIDENT: No. The only thing I can think of, Pete (Brandt), is that the State Department asked the Legation over there, but you had better check on that. I do not know why that would break because, obviously, the Legation is keeping us in touch a couple of times a day. I sent no other message.

Q Mr. President, there is a report that the Budget Bureau has rejected a recommendation by Secretary Wallace for a cotton loan on the crop now in the gin. I think the loan was reported to be 8.3 cents a pound.

THE PRESIDENT: No. The thing is being discussed -- the Bureau of the Budget and the Department of Agriculture -- and I am trying to find out why they want more loan money on the 1939 crop. I have not been sufficiently informed as to why they want more money. I thought they had enough. In other words, they are being asked

to present their case.

Q I see.

Q Mr. President, reverting to that change in personnel on the Boundary Commission, sir, that you spoke of last time: There are several score commissions. Are there any in the same category as far as the Budget is concerned? In other words, do you anticipate similar changes?

THE PRESIDENT: We are trying to find out now if the actual treaties which create the commissions, the international treaties, allow us to put in Government officials, thereby saving money. We will probably do it, but some of the treaties make it impossible for us to put in Government officials.

Q I was wondering about all the other commissions. You have many which have been set up by Acts of Congress in the last, oh, many years. There must be scores of them.

THE PRESIDENT: Not very many. We ran them down last year and we have eliminated a good many of them. We wound up their affairs and we are continuing to wind up their affairs. Well, for instance, here is a case you cannot use. It is entirely off the record. You take the Battle Monuments Commission: General Pershing is Chairman of it and, obviously, I am not going to abolish it as long as General Pershing lives. The monuments are completed and the work of the Commission is completed except for the maintenance of the graves and the monuments in France and, in time, that will become a regular function of the War Department.

Q Mr. President, Premier Molotoff today accused you of mixing in Polish-(Russian?)Finnish negotiations in contradiction of our

neutrality policy. Is there anything you can tell us about that?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not had any report of that.

Q Within the past two weeks or ten days Chairman Fly of the Communications Commission has seen you a couple of times and was supposed to have been over here yesterday with Mr. McNinch. Can you discuss it?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think so. It is general work of the Commission.

Q Has it anything to do with this surveillance of international neutrality?

THE PRESIDENT: Only that they are going ahead with the survey and checkup of amateur radio stations in this country so as to prevent this country from being used as a base of operations by any belligerent. Of course that is, in a sense, a part of the statute, a part of the neutrality bill which relates to the use of ships. Well, now, this is almost equally important that we should see to it that radio stations in this country shall not be used by belligerents for the furtherence of the war. That is all that the Communications Commission is doing. They are checking up on these amateur sets.

Q We were told the other day that they were doing a good deal more with the cooperation of communication companies, checking on messages.

THE PRESIDENT: No, the Communications Commission is confining itself to the amateur sets.

Q Going back to Molotoff for a minute, do you consider the conduct of his government neutral in the matter of the CITY OF FLINT?

THE PRESIDENT: That is a thing I cannot answer.

Q Congressman Havenner (Representative Franck R. Havenner) said today that you had discussed with him the status of the Pacific Naval defense. Can you tell us anything about that?

THE PRESIDENT: Both of them (Representatives Havenner and Welch) wanted a kind word about the Pacific Coast, especially San Francisco Bay, and I gave it to them. I pointed out that, on the Pacific Coast, in the event of any increase in the Navy, we would undoubtedly have to have, on both coasts, facilities to take care of an additional number of ships. On the Pacific Coast, because of the geography, it seems fairly clear that the three main bases, points of operation, are Puget Sound, San Francisco Bay and Southern California. Of course that was a nice kind word to say to San Francisco Bay Congressmen and it is all to the good.

Q Did you discuss developing a steel industry on the Pacific Coast?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Well, that is an old hobby of mine. That dates from 1913. I have been trying to get the steel companies to build a steel plant on the Pacific Coast because, from all the information we have had from the Geological Survey and the Bureau of Mines and Department of Commerce experts, there is a tremendous consumption of steel on the Coast and there is a great deal of various kinds of ore (available).

There has always been a shortage of coal out there but, at the present time, as we all know, the electric furnace is becoming a much greater factor in making steel than it was in the old days. Now, out there on the Coast, they have a surplus of cheap electricity. Bonneville Dam could have more generators put into it,

for instance, and can increase its total output. With Grand Coulee coming in and with various other developments, electric power is plentiful and cheap and what we are trying to do -- what I would like to see done, put it that way -- is to see a steel plant or plants built on the Pacific Coast, using western ore and western electricity and western labor. I think it can be made a business success instead of shipping structural steel and all kinds of steel all the way across the continent by rail or through the Panama Canal. Economically it is a sound thing to do.

Q Would the incursion of the steel industry in that way have a strategical value?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know what the story is lately. In the old days they undoubtedly worked against putting up steel plants on the Coast. Whether their attitude has changed in the last few years or not, I cannot say.

Q Was there any discussion of the distance that electricity can be transported in using it for steel?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q That would center it in Seattle?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you know, there is a good deal of electricity around San Francisco.

Q Bonneville, I meant?

THE PRESIDENT: Of course the bulk of the water power is in the Northwest.

Q We have got some down in the Southwest.

THE PRESIDENT: You do have and there is more there to be developed.

Q What is the objection to building a steel plant out there?

THE PRESIDENT: That you will have to ask the steel people.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Wait a minute. I have one thing I thought somebody would ask questions about. I wrote to Chairman Taylor (Honorable Edward T. Taylor, Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee) yesterday, and told him that I propose to submit to the Congress the beginning of the regular session in January, supplemental estimates of appropriations for this, the fiscal year 1940, aggregating approximately $275,000,000.; in other words, that this sum would defray the cost for this year of safeguarding and enforcing the neutrality of the United States and strengthening national defense within the limits of peacetime authorizations; in other words, carrying out the three Executive Orders of September 8, 1939, where we increase the War, Navy, Marine Corps, Commerce Department -- no, not Commerce but Coast Guard and Justice, which was a very small item in it.

While the increase in rate of expenditures made necessary by these Executive Orders will not require additional appropriations until early in February of 1940, it is wholly within the right of Congress to take up at this time the detail of these authorizations and the deficiencies created thereby. I will be glad to submit detailed supplemental estimates if and when desired by the Committee and, in the absence of any special request by the Committee I will submit supplemental estimates in January, at the beginning of the session.

At the same time I received today a letter from Congressman

Scrugham, of the Naval Affairs Subcommittee on Appropriations, and I understand we are going to send up the details of these estimates I think on the thirteenth of November so that his Committee will have them at that time, study them and be ready for a meeting of the subcommittee around the usual time, which is about the first of December.

Q That is just the breakdown for the Navy?

THE PRESIDENT: No, that is the whole thing.

Q The whole thing?

THE PRESIDENT: In other words, the actual estimated cost of this fiscal year of the increase of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, plus the putting in commission of the various ships and fixing up the training stations, and so on, will be $275,000,000. I think my original estimate, I gave it as less than $300,000,000. Well, this is it, it is $275,000,000.

Q Did you mention Justice?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that is the increase of 150 men. That will go to Justice soon.

Q That means as soon as the House acts on the neutrality bill you are washed up?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Will you ask this session to authorize Colonel Fleming to hold the post to which he has been designated?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. He has been detailed to assist the Secretary of Labor and that is all.

Q I understood that the man who is acting administrator could, under the law, only hold that post for thirty days?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know.

Q Are copies of that (indicating the letter to Chairman Taylor) being made public?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think you need the copies. That is all there is to it.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, sir.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #594,
Executive Offices of the White House,
November 3, 1939, 10.50 A.M.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Where is the Surgeon General?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

I think, as long as you cannot handle this thing (of convincing Russell Young, who had been ill, that he should go to southern climes for his health's sake) alone, you had better have a committee appointed for him.

Q (Mr. Godwin) We are waiting either for a destroyer or a White House automobile.

THE PRESIDENT: It is all right. You cannot have a destroyer but you can have a White House car with a squad of Marines to put him into it. And you can have the photographers too, to let him see how it feels.

Q (Mr. Young) I am going to try to get away.

THE PRESIDENT: Will you go down and see Mac?

Q (Mr. Young) Yes. That's pretty country down there.

THE PRESIDENT: Take a week and see Mac.

Q (Mr. Young) I'd like to.

THE PRESIDENT: I wish you would do that. Mac needs it, too. It is a good idea.

Q When you go to Warm Springs, will you see Mac?

THE PRESIDENT: (Indicating affirmative) He is coming on very well, though.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't believe I have got anything today.

Q Mr. President, would you care to comment on the record of the airlines in having operated five hundred million miles without a fatal accident?

THE PRESIDENT: Steve just gave me a report from Chairman Hinckley. Steve, do you want to have it mineographed or shall I read it? I can read it. It is not very difficult -- not many figures.

(Reading):

"Last night the 17 scheduled airlines operating within the United States --"

that does not include offshore companies --

"reached a really extraordinary safety record. They have now carried passengers for a total of 500,000,000 passenger-miles since they last had an accident involving the death or serious injury of any person. That is a volume of passenger traffic equivalent to transporting the entire population of the District of Columbia from Washington to Boston and back again. During the seven months and seven days that have now passed since the last serious accident on any of our domestic airlines, more than 52,000,000 miles have been flown by their airplanes and over one-and-a-quarter million passengers have been carried. Prior to the passage of the Civil Aeronautics Act in June of last year, there never had been a period of complete freedom from accident that covered operation of more than about 210,000,000 passenger-miles, - nor, so far as records available to us reveal, had the airlines of any other country ever enjoyed complete freedom from accident over an amount of operation even one-half as great as has been rolled up during these seven accident-free months in domestic air transport in the United States."

Q Mr. President, you are probably familiar -- I assume that you are familiar with the Neutrality Bill, both sides, both versions, and it seems to me that the bill to be passed will require you to issue another proclamation and it is not legal until you do so?

THE PRESIDENT: Several proclamations.

Q Are you prepared to say whether or not you will issue the proclama-

tions as soon or as rapidly as you sign the Bill?

THE PRESIDENT: As soon as you go out, I am having Mr. Berle (Assistant Secretary of State) in for a preliminary study of the necessary proclamations and I will see the Secretary of State this afternoon. Until I have studied them I cannot give you any date for their issuance. Of course it will be after the signing of the bill but I hope it will be as soon as possible after the Bill comes down here.

Q In view of the fact that the Bill has been finished up and both ends agreed, can you give us any indications as to whether it is satisfactory from your point of view?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't thought of it. I suppose the most terse way of putting it is that I am very glad that the Bill has restored the historic position of neutrality of the United States.

Q Can we quote that directly?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, almost a month ago a German admiral, Raeder, very kindly sent a couple of our destroyers and subchasers and Coast Guard boats on a wild goose chase, in spite of the closed season. Have you, by any chance, gotten any story or information from the Berlin people as to why the Admiral was so kind as to give that tip to our --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No, Constantine (Mr. Brown); that remains one of the mysteries that probably won't be solved until after the war is over.

Q Mr. Landon, speaking two days ago in Iowa, criticised you in respect to our foreign policy generally; he made specific reference to the

safety zones and thought that that was dangerous to our neutrality. Can you comment on that, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so, except that a good many people have failed to read the Panama declaration.

Q Mr. President, regarding that safety zone, -- some people call it a chastity belt -- I don't know whether it is right or not -- (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: What did he say?

Q Chastity belt. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Did you ever go to the Cluny Museum in Paris?

Q Yes, sir.

Q Mr. President, have you asked the Congressional leaders to stay in Washington until after the adjournment of Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: Not since I first suggested it which was about the twenty-first of September. Of course they all know; that was what I said to the Congress. I hope that they will stay or be handy.

Q May I continue my question? (Laughter) -- Whether that belt has actually been enforced -- whether it is now in force or not?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q It is?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q In spite of the opinion of other nations, like Great Britain?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q It is in force now?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the thing to do is to read the Declaration of Panama.

Q I was reading some statement from London too; that is why I am asking.

Q Reports from South America indicate that there are approximately eighty German merchant vessels in various Latin American ports. Apparently the application of the safety zone gives them protection so they can engage in inter-American commerce.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so.

Q It does not?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, no. In the first place, it does not. In the second place I have not heard of any of them that were actually proposing to engage in inter-American commerce.

Q I think one ship has moved, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: That is probably the HAVILAND. I think she is just trying to get rid of some copra she had on board. As far as I know, she has not taken on any other cargo. She was loaded at the time (of the outbreak of the war) and I imagine she is trying to get rid of what she had on board. That is not engaging in commerce between ports.

Q If a hostile act were engaged in by a British ship against one of those ships, that would not necessarily invoke --

THE PRESIDENT: Now you are getting to the "iffy" stage. We will have to cross that bridge when we come to it. Just like the eighty ships engaging in inter-American commerce, there isn't any sign of it.

Q How long do you think you can use the 1930 Tariff Act as a basis for your Reciprocal Trade Agreements?

THE PRESIDENT: My, you must have sat up all night thinking of that one.

Q Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. That is beyond me. My mind doesn't click quickly enough.

Q Mr. President, do you care to comment on the recent speech of Representative McCormack (of Massachusetts) asking for the recall of Ambassador Steinhardt?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so. Of course I think that one could put it this way, only you would have to paraphrase it: That I have never believed that poor manners should beget poor manners.

Q To follow on my tariff question: Have any Governmental agencies or any other agencies -- I mean private industry -- brought to your attention the situation in the fox fur farm industry? The Bureau of Biological Survey contends that there may be five or six hundred thousand pelts dumped in this country from foreign countries and farmers seem a little agitated about it and are trying to get some action either to prevent dumping or to raise the tariff. Has that come to your attention?

THE PRESIDENT: I should not say that that was a normal tariff matter. Obviously in a large portion of the world that is accustomed to buy and use expensive furs the consumer demand has fallen off. In most of Europe the consumer demand for furs, I take it, would be very greatly curtailed. Now, that means that the normal fur supply in the rest of the world would logically seek a market in the Americas where the consumer purchasing power is still fairly high. In other words, it is a war question primarily.

Q Mr. President, was there any news in the visit of the Civil Service Commission and their field people yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: No; just to say "How do you do."

Q Were you surprised at the majority you got in the House?

THE PRESIDENT: Very gratified.

Q Any plans for the week end, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I think if everything is cleared up by tomorrow and I get my proclamations in shape, that I will probably go up to vote either Saturday midnight or some time Sunday and, if everything is quiet on Monday, I will stay over and vote on Tuesday and then come back.

Q That would indicate that you think you will be able to issue those proclamations before you leave?

THE PRESIDENT: I hope so; I am going to take it up now -- in a few minutes.

Q Can you tell us something of the nature of those proclamations?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #595,
In the Study of the President's Home at Hyde Park, New York,
November 7, 1939, 10.55 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Good people, how are you?

Q Good morning.

THE PRESIDENT: George (Mr. Durno), you have a red nose, old top. Where does that come from?

Q (Mr. Durno) This cold air.

THE PRESIDENT: Snappy air. It is all right. Do you people all agree with the diagnosis I have just heard from the patient?

Q I think so.

THE PRESIDENT: George swears that his red nose comes from the cool air. Is that all right?

Q (Mr. Durno) I would say they all had better. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I do not think there is any news at all.

Q (Mr. Harkness) Well, now that the Neutrality Act has been enacted, are we going to have politics --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No, not as far as I am concerned.

Q (Mr. Harkness) -- or is the truce still on?

Q It was rather unusual for Norway to return the CITY OF FLINT as they did.

THE PRESIDENT: The CITY OF FLINT?

Q Have you heard from Mrs. Harriman?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes. I suppose they have in the Department (of State). They heard verbally last night.

Q Did she get down to Bergen?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think they have any more than the story they

printed this morning.

Q Mr. President, I understand you have been taking an interest in the Vanderbilt Estate. Is that a personal interest or is it on behalf of some Governmental agency?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think you would have to ask the owner, Mrs. Van Alen about that. I think Mrs. Van Alen has been trying for some time to dispose of the place.

Q We understand you went down and looked it over on the last trip.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. She came down here to lunch.

Q Do you have any suggestions or ideas as to how you think it might best be used?

THE PRESIDENT: You know what I have felt all along, for the last twenty or forty years, that it is a place that is probably the most historic large country place around these parts, going back to about 1750 or 1760. It has had very wonderful tree plantings in every generation since then. Incidentally, it is the original Hyde Park, the village was named from it, and the name was given to it by Peter Fauconnier, who was the secretary to the Earl of Clarenden, whose family name was Hyde. I think I am correct in stating that the name was given to it in honor of the Royal Governor of New York some twenty or thirty years before Hyde Park, London, was named, which is rather amusing.

Q Before the Hyde Park of London?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q What is this man's name?

THE PRESIDENT: Peter Fauconnier, and he was the secretary to the Governor of New York and New Jersey and was largely responsible for

the royal grants that were made in both colonies at that time. This you cannot use, because it is speaking ill of the dead, but I think he got his every time a royal grant was given (laughter), which is literally true, only you cannot use it.

Q It has a familiar smell, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. You know -- again this is entirely off the record -- there was a group in those years from 1660 or 1680 down to 1710 of gentlemen in New York that you and I would call real estate speculators. Among them were two groups of nine. One was the Great Nine. They got all of this section of Dutchess County. It was really a real estate proposition on those older grants. Having got a large grant, this county, for instance, they divided it up into squares and each got a square. There were thirty-six squares and nine water lots and each one got four squares and one water lot. Then they proceeded to bring people in from abroad and other people and gave them, farmers, a piece of land, first on a rental basis but, in effect, with an option to buy. That is how this county came to be settled. Then, another group of nine, some of them the same, got the other royal grant. This fellow, Peter Fauconnier, was the go-between; he was pretty well recognized as the go-between who arranged these grants. He got the Governor, acting for King James, to O.K. the thing.

Q Mr. President, do you mean that this estate ought to be preserved as a public place?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, up here? Oh, I do not know; they have not got to that stage yet.

Q We contacted Washington on that, the Park Service, and they said they

just made a survey.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that is as far as they have got.

Q Mr. President, have you read the newspaper reports on Earl Browder's speech?

THE PRESIDENT: I did not. I only read the headline and I cannot talk to you on the record about it either, but I would use it for background. Where does one draw the line between "revolution" and the two words he used? That is about what they were. Do you remember the two words he used?

Q "Swift transition"?

THE PRESIDENT: Immediate transition, or something like that. Well, it is a very, very nice distinction between those two phrases -- "revolution" and "immediate transition." Of course, if it should be held that the words -- this is only background, you cannot even attribute it to me -- if it should be held that "immediate transition" is the parlor term for "revolution," that they are practically synonymous, then he and the party he is associated with are guilty of conspiring against the Government. Of course it is a question of how the courts would hold in that case. I suppose it could be argued both ways. It is awfully close to the line.

Q It was a very wild speech. I have not read it.

THE PRESIDENT: I only read the lead and it was in the lead.

Probably some of your offices which have not called you up will call you up about these eight ships that are to be transferred. The thing is held up. I did not hear about it until half past six last night and I have asked them to hold it up and to give me, personally, a check on two questions. There is not any question, of

course, about the neutrality end of it at all. That is not one of the questions. In other words, if any of us owned property, we have a perfect right to sell that property to a neutral nation or to transfer it, the title of it, into a neutral nation. There is no question about that. Then there is another thing on this transfer that is not a question, also raised by neutrality: There are no Americans involved in this from the point of view of losing their lives or getting us into trouble, because if these ships are transferred, no American could serve thereon as an officer or member of the crew. Therefore, if they should be sunk, there would be no international episode, either on account of the ship or on account of Americans who might lose their lives or on account of the cargo. There could be no international episode. In other words, it could not involve the United States in a difficult situation if anything were to happen to those ships. That is perfectly clear.

Now there are two questions which the Maritime Commission, at my request, is going to report to me on. We may get it -- I do not suppose we will get it today but probably tomorrow. They both involve the same thing. The maritime law, putting it into the simplest terms, has a clause in it which was put in for two purposes. The clause required the consent of the Maritime Commission for the transfer of an American flagship to another flag. Now, if you go back into the reason for that clause, in the debates on the bill, the recommendations made, it was for two purposes: The first purpose was to prevent the sale of American merchant ships if we considered them important to national defense. Well, just for example, if we thought there was any particular danger of our getting involved in

a war, the Maritime Commission would probably refuse to allow the transfer of a flag on any American ship. That situation does not exist today. Another example is that if a ship had been built under Navy specifications and was still a comparatively new ship, the question of our own national defense might be involved. That is one reason for requiring the consent of the Maritime Commission to a transfer, and I am getting a report on that.

The other reason for putting that clause into the bill was to prevent, in time of peace, some neutral nation from coming in and offering a very high price for some particular line going to some particular place that they wanted to end American competition in. In other words, supposing an American line was running from here to South America and the British or the Germans or the Italians wanted to put us out of commission. They might come in, conceivably, and buy that American line running to South America.

Q You mean under cover, so to speak?

THE PRESIDENT: No. They might buy the line and ask that it be transferred to the British or the German flag, which would put us out of the South American business on that particular line. The maritime act was intended to put the American flag into various runs all over the world, therefore they were required to approve transfers for that reason, so that other nations could not stop our competition. Now on that also I am to have a report.

Q Pending that report, Mr. President, the transfer is being held up?

THE PRESIDENT: As I understand it, George (Mr. Durno), the transfer has been approved, was approved yesterday, but that -- since that action they met last night and told the owners to hold everything

for final confirmation until tomorrow.

Q Mr. President, this is a hypothetical question and, if I may, I will ask it off the record. If the CITY OF FLINT were sunk, I mean by the Germans, I wonder what would ensue in the way of complications?

THE PRESIDENT: Off the record, God knows. In other words, as I said the other day in Washington, this particular FLINT case today has so many absolutely brand new features that nobody ever heard of or thought of before in international law that nobody can guess. In international law one case might apply and one side might say, "No, it is the other case that applies."

It is a field day for international lawyers already. (Laughter)

Q What time will you vote, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Twelve o'clock. Mrs. Roosevelt gets in at 11.45 and I will meet her over at the other cottage and then come over here to pick up my mother and then I suppose we will vote about half past twelve.

Q Any observations on state issues?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. (Laughter)

Q Do you anticipate, Mr. President, having any comment tonight, perhaps?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Any local comments you would like to make?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, probably if Elmer Van Wagner should win, I would probably send a message down via Bill (Mr. Hassett) saying, "Ha, ha" or something like that.

Q I think you said something like that in 1936.

THE PRESIDENT: I believe I did, yes. (Laughter)

RcB 3/7/56

Q There have been some reports out in California that you sent a telegram out there as Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, endorsing again this oil bill.

THE PRESIDENT: I did. I sent it to Governor Olson and I have not seen a peep about it in the newspapers. It is all right.

[Atkinson?]

Q That is the Dickinson Bill, is it not?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, the county ticket on November first was not quite complete. Would you want to comment on it or anything in broad lines for the future?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think I can only say that whoever wins in the Sheriff's fight, I hope he is a citizen of the county and that the Sheriff's office will be a great deal better run than it has been in the last years. That is perfectly all right. It is nonpartisan, you might say. It is a thoroughly election day, nonpartisan statement.

Q Is this celebration here on the cornerstone laying, is that going to be open to the public; I mean in general? I imagine Dutchess County historians would like to come.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I will tell you. The way they are going to run it is this: There will be special invitations by card to a reception here. That is for the people connected with it, after lunch. And then the actual dedication will be at, I think, three o'clock in the afternoon, the laying of the cornerstone, and I would be delighted to have people come to that, out there in the field.

Q Anybody?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, everybody. The only thing is, we cannot have them

here in the house because it will be swamped.

Q When are you leaving?

THE PRESIDENT: George (Mr. Durno), I had a bad cold in my nose yesterday and I decided that as long as it is clear you fellows would like to have a little golf and we might wait up until tomorrow night. The cold is much better.

Q Are you going to Warm Springs as usual?

THE PRESIDENT: I hope to get down there Thanksgiving, probably for not more than four or five days. That, of course, is subject to cancellation as everything is these days.

Q The boys seem to be afraid to ask you about this Thanksgiving.

THE PRESIDENT: Which one?

Q I don't know. I just heard the whispering.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it is all right. We are celebrating the twenty-third in this State and in the State of Georgia.

Q Ed Rivers said he would proclaim Thanksgiving on the sixteenth if you would come down this year.

THE PRESIDENT: It is all right.

Q He is probably thankful for a lot of things.

Q Do you think you will see Mac (Mr. McIntyre) on this trip to Warm Springs?

THE PRESIDENT: I hope so. Either on the way down or back.

Q The Park dedication will be out?

THE PRESIDENT: That is off. It is too cold. I would not want to take you to the Park at this time of the year. It will be like a certain lake in Washington I took you to once. (Laughter)

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #596,
Executive Offices of the White House,
November 10, 1939, 10.36 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Have you been away?

Q (Mr. Young) No, sir; stayed right here.

THE PRESIDENT: Our last resort is the Marines.

Q (Mr. Young) The Surgeon General; he could make me go.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, what news have you got?

Q We have a lot of questions, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Somebody think of something?

Q Can you straighten out the maritime situation for us, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Working on it. That is all I can say.

Q When may we expect anything?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know; I cannot prognosticate.

Q Any week-end plans, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: No; staying right here.

Q Have you made up your plan for tomorrow as far as Arlington is concerned?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, going out to the regular thing. We will go out at quarter of eleven and get there for the ceremony and come back afterwards. In the evening I am taking part in the Red Cross appeal, at 10.30.

At 11.00 o'clock (this morning) I asked some of the seamen Labor Union people to come in, the longshoremen, because I am approaching -- that is about all I can say about the maritime ques-

tion -- I am approaching it from the human angle as well as the property angle, which a good many people seem to have completely overlooked, callously enough.

Q Did you say "as well as the property"?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, as well as the property angle. In other words, we have a problem which was created by the statute. There are about -- well, as a rough guess, it is awfully hard to give any exact figure but I would say, offhand, it is between twenty-five and thirty-five American flag ships that have been running in between the ports that are now outlawed, in other words, belligerent ports or danger zone ports and, as a result of the legislation, they are now tied up or will be by the time they get back from current voyages. Now, that means not only twenty-five to thirty-five ships but also their crews.

There are several things that we are going to talk about at 11.00 o'clock in relation to the human problem. The first relates to something that cannot be done until the next session of Congress and that is to try to apply the social security law to the crews of ships as well as to industrial people who work in industrial plants. That would mean the same system as we use in industry and would cover both old age pensions and unemployment insurance. As far as I can tell now, I shall make a recommendation to cover that to the next session of the Congress. However, that does not give immediate relief and I am working now with the Maritime Commission on a project for giving training under the auspices of the Maritime Commission to a portion, not all, of these sailors and officers who have been thrown out of work because of the neutrality law going

into effect. We hope that we will be able to give additional training to a substantial portion of those people who have been put on the beach because the ships have been laid up.

Q What kind of training, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Seamen's training -- officers' training.

Q Any naval training, necessarily?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, no. Merchant ship training.

Q Does that have an income attached to it?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, the transfer of ships to foreign flags would not affect the number of American seamen put on the beach, would it?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not a bit.

The third thing which I am working on -- I do not want to hold out any hope that it will be effected but it would be of some assistance in this problem -- that is the use by the Government of some of these twenty-five to thirty-five ships in order to go and fetch certain materials that the Government is purchasing under existing law for -- well, I think we have called it "stock piles," haven't we? We are spending a good deal of money to buy various war materials to store up in case of future need. There is $10,000,000. appropriated for that at the present time and, secondly, we have, as you know, an agreement which went into effect last summer with Great Britain by which we do some swapping. We are swapping some cotton for rubber and tin. Now, that rubber and tin has to be sent for to the East Indies and it will take additional ships to bring that rubber and tin, that is to say, ships over and above the normal commercial needs of that area, to bring that rubber and

tin to this country. I believe -- I do not know whether the State Department said anything about this or not -- I think either that there is an agreement, or it is being discussed with the British, by which they will take the cotton from this country to England. Does anybody know if that has been announced?

Q It has not been announced.

THE PRESIDENT: Of course, obviously, we cannot send American cotton to England in American flag ships.

Q Mr. President, do you regard the transfer in September, and the Maritime Commission's approval given to the transfer, of fifteen Standard Oil tankers to Panama as, perhaps, setting a precedent?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. Of course it is perfectly legal. You see, unfortunately, in spite of what some people say, the President of the United States is more or less bound by the law. It is a curious and strange idea which has been challenged in the past few days by people who, in the past, have been most intent on confining the President of the United States to the strict letter of the law. It is one of those anomalies which columnists are very apt to enjoy. Go ahead, you are one. (Laughter)

Q In the last analysis, wouldn't the interests of these American seamen probably best be served by the maintenance instead of the abandonment of these ships, even if it does involve the transfer to another flag?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think it makes much difference to the poor fellows who are on the beach anyway. If the ship stays at the dock, they are on the beach; if the ship is transferred or sold to some other nation, they are still on the beach.

Q But, after the war is over, they can return to American registry and the American seamen would still, theoretically, have these jobs open to them?

THE PRESIDENT: You are doing a bit of theorizing that, after they have been used for war purposes for some time, they will still be worth transferring back to the American flag. I doubt it. They are all on their last legs now.

Q Could you give us the legal interpretation? You said the transfer of the Standard Oil ships did not set a precedent and that, contrary to what the columnists say, you are bound by the law. Does that mean you interpret that law as saying the ships can be transferred?

THE PRESIDENT: There is no question that the ships can be legally transferred or sold. We are simply trying to work out other methods. That is as far as we can go now. That means transfer with full retention of title in the present owning company.

Q Any thought of transferring any of these idle ships to the South American and other routes?

THE PRESIDENT: You know, that is a thing as to which the average layman has a happy thought, and a great many of them do these days, that it is a perfectly easy thing. There are a lot of routes -- South America, Australia, China and so forth and so on. Why not keep them under the American flag and put them on these other routes? It is a beautiful thought. But a ship goes from one place to another not just for the pleasure of making the voyage. They do it in order to carry goods or passengers or both and, therefore, it becomes a problem of whether there are enough goods and

passengers to justify the voyage. You can be quite sure that if there should be enough goods and passengers to keep these ships under the American flag on other routes, they would be kept under the American flag. But, unfortunately, we have a shortage of goods and passengers.

Q Is there a thought of organizing another company to keep these ships?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not that I know of. I have not heard.

Q Have you read Senator Tydings' complaint that he is being abandoned politically and that a certain Webb of Maryland has been thrown out of office because he happens to be a --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I never heard of Webb. Who is Webb?

Q It is a long story and not a very interesting one. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I never heard of it.

Q His last job was assistant something or other in the census.

THE PRESIDENT: Assistant what?

Q State Supervisor of the Census, I think.

THE PRESIDENT: I never heard of him and I never heard of the job.

Q Can you tell us something of the conferences with Lewis and Green, other than on the maritime situation?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing to tell that you or I could write. Just continuing conversations; that is as far as we got.

Q Mr. Green intimated very plainly that you asked that the conferences be resumed, and he said his committee was ready any time the C.I.O. was. Mr. Lewis came out and referred us to you.

THE PRESIDENT: I may not have discussed the same thing with Mr. Lewis.

Q He said it was the same thing.

THE PRESIDENT: I am sure you cannot get a story out of it. I doubt if

I could tell you one myself. We haven't got to the point where we can write any kind of a story. Incidentally, the more stories which are not strictly accurate which go out, the more it hurts the possibility of getting labor together. That is really the fact.

Q Mr. President, have you made your southern plans yet?

THE PRESIDENT: I think I will probably go down about the twenty-first, which is a Tuesday, and come back probably on Sunday.

Q Will you come by way of Asheville?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. I hope to either go by Asheville or come back by Asheville and see Mac (Mr. McIntyre).

Q Are you going to attend the Army and Navy Game in Philadelphia?

THE PRESIDENT: I hope so, for the first time, almost, in history.

Q Can you tell us anything new about your reaction to Mr. Browder's Boston speech?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, there wasn't anything new. I think Kannee (the recorder) has got the notes of what I said last Tuesday.

Q Mr. President, in a recent Press Conference you spoke of the possibility of using cheap electricity to develop a steel industry on the West Coast?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes?

Q There is a situation in Northern Minnesota that is somewhat like that where the supply of high-grade ores is rapidly going. With the help of the University of Minnesota there is a project developed to bring in gas from the gas fields and develop the low-grade ores. I wonder if your attitude on that would be somewhat similar?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, if you are scientifically minded, the answer is

yes. In that same connection, you know old Ross (Mr. J. D. Ross), if you will remember, was working for that section, the Dakotas and Minnesota, for the use of this low-grade coal that is up there in fairly large quantities.

Q The lignite?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and very close to the surface. In other words, a strip mining proposition, with the idea of turning it into electricity at the mines and using it on the smelting of low-grade ores. Well, that was two years ago and I have not heard anything more about it since then.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #597,
Executive Offices of the White House,
November 14, 1939, 4.00 P.M.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think I have got any particular news. I sent up yesterday to Chairman Taylor of the Appropriations Committee the supplemental amendments on the emergency measures that were started in September. Those were to carry the Army, the Navy, the Coast Guard and the F. C. I. [B.] through until the end of this fiscal year. They totaled $271,000,000. and the breakdown is: for the military establishment, $119,000,000.; for the naval establishment, $146,000,000.; for the Coast Guard, four and a half million dollars; for the F. C. I. [B.], one and one-half million dollars. Those were the four items.

Q Is the Marine Corps included in that naval figure?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Today is the fourth anniversary of the Philippine Commonwealth. They are celebrating it in the Philippines. I wonder if you could say anything that would make them happy. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you can say that I, also, am happy -- happy over their four years of success as a commonwealth.

Q Have we done anything officially to show concern over the fate of the Netherlands and Belgium?

THE PRESIDENT: Have you asked the State Department?

Q We have.

THE PRESIDENT: And what did they say?

Q Nothing. (Laughter)

RcB 3-27-56

Q Mr. President, the week-end newspapers carry the story that Vice President Garner is going to permit his name to go before the Convention. Does that alter your plans in any way? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, don't be so subtle. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, the Maritime Commission today declined to transfer four American cargo ships to the flag of Panama. May we guess from that that the same action will be taken in regard to the United States liners?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. I did not know they had declined. Of course, at the present time we are working, trying to find cargoes for those ships and jobs for those men and that is about as far as we have got.

Q No decision then regarding the matter?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no final decision. Oh, I think you can see which way the wind is blowing, Fred (Mr. Essary).

Q (Mr. Essary) I think I have.

Q Are you making any success in regard to that quest for jobs for those men? You spoke at considerable length about that.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I think one or two things are about ready to go through. The Coast Guard training has been announced. I think the Maritime Commission training is about ready to go into effect. Of course that works in with W. P. A. in the case of those married people who do not want to go to training schools -- in other words, special projects. And then the other thing is what I have referred to as trying to get as many ships in commission as we can.

Q Will they get priority on W. P. A. jobs?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know; I do not know.

Q Is there anything to say on the Irish protest against the bar to shipping to Ireland?

THE PRESIDENT: Only that we have had, not official protests but we have had unofficial sorrow expressed that a good many other countries are in the same boat. There is the whole of the Baltic; there is all of Sweden and Southern Norway. All of them are independent neutral nations. There is Holland and Belgium and Denmark. They are all in the same boat.

Unfortunately, it is a question of fact as to what is a definite danger zone for American ships. I have the utmost sympathy with all of the countries that are factually within the danger zone.

Q Any thought of transferring any ships to the Irish flag?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. Maybe we might be in a receptive frame of mind if you got a good offer. (Laughter)

Q Did you indicate that those countries you mentioned were among those that, unofficially, had indicated some concern?

THE PRESIDENT: Not officially. I do not mean the governments of those countries, I mean individuals in those countries.

Q Do you contemplate an Executive Order or otherwise with respect to competitive bidding in Army, Navy or Maritime Commission procurement?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing more than what has been done on this business.

Q That only provides for those constructed outside of the territorial limits?

THE PRESIDENT: That is right; that is all. No change any place else.

Q You said you were bound by the letter of the law as well as the

spirit of the law. Secretary Hull said that these transfers would be in violation of the spirit of the law. Do you feel the same way?

THE PRESIDENT: I think, in part, yes. There is one phase that I have not seen anybody bring out sufficiently and that is the question as to whether we ought to put any sister American republics into a position which is different from our own position on neutrality. Of course we have done it in some of those cases where the water has gone over the dam some time before, like the transfer of some tankers to the Panama flag. Well, that was water over the dam but, from now on, the more we think it over, we think we ought not to put them in a different position on neutrality from what we occupy ourselves.

Q That would not apply to Ireland?

THE PRESIDENT: No; no.

Q What is the solution then, to tie up the ships, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I will not try to explain the solution -- various things.

Q Can we tell which way the wind is blowing by the direction of the water over the dam? (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, I noticed over the week end that you saw Ned Bruce's show at the Corcoran Art Gallery. What did you think of it?

THE PRESIDENT: I thought it one of the most interesting exhibits I have ever seen. It is tremendously inspiring and the thing that stands out in modern American art, as shown by the original exhibit there three years ago or four years ago, is that there is nothing morbid about American art. It shows the spirit behind the average

American is refreshingly clean.

(Inaudible comment)

I did not make any comparisons. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, have you named a W. P. A. Administrator from Missouri?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know; I have no idea. I did not know there was a vacancy.

Q Mr. President, the Delegate from Alaska, Mr. Dimond, said he protested to you about the appointment of Dr. Gruening as Governor of Alaska. Are you going to do anything about that?

THE PRESIDENT: At this time I do not know. Ask me again in a month or two.

Q Mr. President, do you contemplate sending up a recess appointment for a Wage-Hour Administrator?

THE PRESIDENT: For what?

Q Wage-Hour Administrator?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not between now and the time Congress convenes.

Q Would you care to comment on the reported formation of volunteer civilian groups deputized by local police or local sheriffs, like in Kings County, to search out espionage and subversive activities?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not in favor of it.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #598,
Held while the President was seated in his car
alongside of the Presidential Special Train,
At Hyde Park Station, New York,
November 17, 1939, 8.40 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Has anybody been asleep?

Q I think there was some sleep.

Q A minimum.

THE PRESIDENT: Didn't have an all-night party?

Q No.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know a thing. That is not an unusual condition.

Q Mr. President, are you going to wait until January to fill this Supreme Court vacancy, or could we expect it before then?

THE PRESIDENT: George (Mr. Durno), I haven't really thought about it at all but I think probably, if I were writing the story I would say January unless there were some emergency.

Q Mr. President, after your speech in laying the cornerstone of the Jefferson Memorial, there was some speculation by various columnists on what you meant.

THE PRESIDENT: (Laughing) I watched the faces of everybody and they were funnier than a crutch. They thought something was coming and I expressed the perfectly terrific thought -- I mean one of those soul-stirring, national interest thoughts -- that I hoped that I would be able to go back to the dedication in January, 1941, and all you fellows -- Oh, you have been having an awful time since.

Q I trust you read Mark Sullivan yesterday morning?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Wasn't that funny? I did it deliberately and everybody bit.

Q Mr. President, Senator Wheeler suggested a Congressional investigation of this faulty ship design. What is your information on that subject?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, to put it in lay language, when the ships were designed, when the plans were first drawn, there was a difference of opinion between naval architects -- some of the naval architects and engineers in both Government and private plants felt that the metacentric height, which is not the same thing as the center of gravity --

Q (interposing) What was that phrase you used?

THE PRESIDENT: Metacentric height, which is not the same thing as the center of gravity -- you will have to go and find out why; I could not tell you -- was too high. It was an honest difference of opinion. As the ships were being built the usual thing happened: new inventions, new designs, added more weight, thereby throwing the metacentric height again a little too high according to some opinions. When the ships were tried out, the earlier ones, they found that the school of thought which had said in this highly scientific computation that the metacentric height was too high were correct. Since then they have made certain changes; they have lowered the metacentric height and it is all over.

That is all there is to it, this thing that calls for Congressional investigation. If you tell them that, you tell them the whole thing.

Some newspaper may, quite correctly, remember what Senator Smith (Senator William Alden Smith) of Michigan questioned at the time the TITANIC went down. You remember that one? Don't you know that story? Well, the TITANIC, you know, scraped an iceberg and the ice tore out her plates along the starboard side in a sufficient number of watertight compartments to prevent her staying afloat. A ship, you know, is divided across, across the middle. An investigation was held by the Senate of the United States, or a Congressional Committee. Senator Smith of Michigan said to one of the officers who had been saved, "Didn't your ship have watertight compartments?" The officer said, "Yes, Senator." "If so, why didn't the passengers go into the water-tight compartments and be saved?" (Laughter)

MR. HASSETT: And there was the opening question, "What is an iceberg made of?"

THE PRESIDENT: Yes; that's right; that is true.

MR. HASSETT: He retired from public life.

THE PRESIDENT: Don't say I am forestalling the Senate on this thing, or the Congress, but the whole story has been told. You can have the same thing explained by engineers, if anybody wants to. You will get more on metacentric height.

Q What the heck is that metacentric height?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know; I frankly don't know, except they always tell me in the Navy it is different from center of gravity. Apparently they don't know either.

Q Will you clear us up on the removal of General Ashburn? Steve Early --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I would, if I could, but it is a long-

standing thing. The old -- this is off the record -- the old man has done an awfully good job in all these years. He is awfully old and he did manage to slip himself another $5,000. a year and it is over and above what the obvious intention is. On the other side, the Commerce people did not use their beans in the way they fired him. I think he should have gone but I think the way Monroe Johnson did it was cruel. Well,you have had that.

Q Did your redesignation of Mr. Gruening as Governor of Alaska -- is that indicative that new commissions will have to be issued to other recess appointees? I believe there were some sixteen of them altogether.

THE PRESIDENT: I signed quite a lot right after Congress adjourned.

Q Is that the signing again of new commissions?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q That is because they were not sent up to the special session?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q I presume the entire group will be sent up?

THE PRESIDENT: I think in order to get pay they will have to get new commissions.

Q Can they get pay before they are confirmed by the Senate?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. Frankly, I don't know. I don't believe they can.

Q I don't think so either.

THE PRESIDENT: I believe they have to have new commissions in order to make their actions legal -- that was it.

Q You don't anticipate any difficulties through challenges of author-

ity in this interim?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Have you any appointments today?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't got a single appointment today, even with a neighbor or a postmaster or a contractor or an architect. Absolutely free.

Q You are going to take a ride today, aren't you, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. It is perfectly grand. It is going to warm up and be perfectly all right. I don't know where I am going but I am going to have a free day today.

Q Anything you can tell us about possible economic or financial aid to Finland? There have been reports that we have promised them economic and financial aid.

THE PRESIDENT: No. They were -- I would check up on this -- they were after a loan about two months ago for some specific purpose. I don't know -- it was to build a railway or something like that, and, as I remember it, they were referred to New York banks because, as you know, they have a perfect right to get a loan from banks -- underwriting. That is quite a while ago.

Q The story was that their attitude toward Russia stiffened on a promise from this country of economic and financial aid.

Q Can you tell us anything, Mr. President, about our position in regard to Belgium and the Netherlands and the peace overtures, the mediation overtures made by the rulers of those two countries. As I understand it, our representative in the Hague had rather a long conversation with the Queen but no information has ever come out.

THE PRESIDENT: No, and it won't. (Laughter) It may, some day.

It is all right. There is no story in it, really, and you would be surprised if you knew what it was. I would say it was not of very great international importance.

MR. BELAIR: In the absence of Mr. Godwin, may I say, "Thank you, Mr. President"?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I will let you know if anything turns up.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #599,
At the Site of the new Post Office,
Wappingers Falls, New York,
November 18, 1939, 12.10 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Are you ready to do some architectural reporting today?

Q Yes, indeed.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, this building here is another adaptation of local old Dutch designs. It differs from some of the others that we built because the end gables are brick on top of the -- above the regular stone (field stone). It is just another type of the old Dutch stone house.

The decoration in this building is going to be very interesting. We are going to have two panels. Down here at the foot of the street is the famous Wappingers Creek. This is (was) the main center of the Wappingers tribe of Indians and the creek was called after them. We will have a picture of the way the falls -- it was a very lovely gorge with falls -- the way it looked at the time that the Marquis de Chastellux came through here to join Rochambeau's army on the way to the siege of Yorktown.

Q Will you spell that?

THE PRESIDENT: I will try to but I am not sure -- C-h-a-s-t-e-l-l-u-x -- the Marquis de Chastellux. He wrote -- he kept a diary. He came over just after Rochambeau landed at Newport in 1780 and they had left Newport and started on the famous march on Yorktown. He came after them and he kept this diary. He came through Wappingers from Newport, across the river, and went on down, on horseback, and he has a complete description of these falls right here at the

foot of the hill, just across the bridge.

This painting, the first panel, will be the way the falls looked at that time, before there were any buildings, before it had been altered in any way.

Then the second picture will be the same scene, from the same spot, from an old painting about 1850, when this was a very big and very important manufacturing center, literally, with cotton mills and the water power all harnessed. It is a picture of the mill and a picture of the houses of the period.

Q Are they using that water power now?

THE PRESIDENT: I could not tell you; I do not know. I think they are -- I think there is a bleachery down here.

Q The town does not look any too prosperous.

THE PRESIDENT: It is a lot better than it used to be ten years or twenty years ago.

Q How much does it cost? (Indicating the post office)

MR. MOORE: (Representative of the Procurement Division of the Treasury Department) About $50,000.

Q Why these gables and brick?

THE PRESIDENT: It is another form of old architecture. Generally, there were three types, one where the stone was carried up to the peak, another one was wood with clapboards on the gable and another was brick.

Q This makes how many of this general type of post office that you have put up in the county?

THE PRESIDENT: What is it? (Turning to Mr. Moore) Of course there are some on the other side of the river.

Q In the valley?

THE PRESIDENT: In the valley. I should think there are three in Ulster County, and the Beacon place -- is that stone?

MR. MOORE: It is a stone building of the colonial type.

THE PRESIDENT: That does not count. We have one at Rhinebeck and one at Poughkeepsie.

MR. MOORE: And then there will be one in Millbrook and one in Pawling.

THE PRESIDENT: One in Millbrook, one in Pawling and one in Hyde Park. That building directly ahead, across there, (indicating) is one of the oldest buildings. It is the old Mesier homestead.

Q How is that spelled?

THE PRESIDENT: M-e-s-i-e-r. And that (indicating) is a public park.

MR. MOORE: Our stonework matches somewhat with the stone chimneys in that building.

Q Mesier homestead -- who is Mesier?

THE PRESIDENT: Some early inhabitant.

Q Some early settler?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and that is now a public park.

Q Who is doing these murals?

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Billings. Isn't that right?

MR. MOORE: Yes, sir; he is working on the murals now.

Q Where is he from?

MR. MOORE: Dutchess County.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, he is somewhere up in the town of Milan.

Q Which town?

THE PRESIDENT: Milan.

Q We could probably find him in the phone book.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q That somewhat resembles that Governor Clinton House.

THE PRESIDENT: It does, a little.

Q It is the same general idea.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Otherwise, everything is all quiet.

Q Are you going to have any advance on your speech tomorrow?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q When do you think we could get it?

THE PRESIDENT: I will try to get it down to you tonight.

Q That would be perfectly fine.

Q Are you going to have any deliberate interpolations?

THE PRESIDENT: No, just plain English. But we never can tell what will happen to the plain English.

Q Nothing we will be able to bite on?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not believe so.

Q For the sake of the record, we were all behind you (at the Jefferson Memorial) so that the people into whose faces you were looking were not us. We did not write it.

THE PRESIDENT: I did not say so. If I had caught George's (Mr. Durno's) eye it would have been all off. I might have said something dreadful.

Bill (Mr. Hassett), have you told them the thing about the Library?

MR. HASSETT: When we get back.

Q We wanted that for Sunday morning papers. We haven't room in the Saturday papers.

THE PRESIDENT: What else was it? I gave you a long dissertation about it yesterday.

MR. HASSETT: It was all on the Library.

Q Where did you go yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: I got lost. I got stuck -- not lost. Did you tell them that?

MR. HASSETT: I did not tell them that.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I got to a corner of the property way out east that I have never been able to get into because I did not buy it until recently. There were about forty acres that I have never been in because there was no road. So I tried to do a little exploring. We took the car into a swamp and I was all right as long as I kept going but I stopped to look at some trees and, unfortunately, when I looked up again -- down again, my car was down to the running board. So we got the Secret Service and three of my men and I got hauled out by man power. (Laughter)

I am trying to build a road in there so that I can get to it. It is really a firebreak -- that is primarily the object of it, a firebreak. I am going out there again this afternoon to try to select a place to get over the swamp.

Q We will watch the Secret Service shoes. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I do not think there is another blessed thing.

Q No change in the plans for Warm Springs, et cetera?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I talked to Washington this morning and everything is all quiet. Nothing new.

Q They certainly made your weather to order for you this trip.

THE PRESIDENT: It says clear and possibly rain tomorrow. This is perfect; it could not be better.

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: George Fox says the greens are pretty good, too.

Q Yes, but his golf isn't so good.

THE PRESIDENT: He said he did a 44.

Q That is not so good for him.

THE PRESIDENT: Isn't it? It is not bad. Anybody who goes under 50 cannot complain.

(The President was driven down to the bridge over Wappingers Falls, where he pointed out to one member of the Press the location of the Falls and the surrounding buildings.)

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #600,
Held in front of the Veeder Cottage,
Warm Springs Foundation, Warm Springs, Georgia,
November 24, 1939, 10.45 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Doc (Mr. O'Connor), you can stay there; they won't bite.

Well, I hear you are quite a golfer.

Q (Mr. Belair) I am not so hot. I did not have to be perfect yesterday.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know a thing; not a thing.

This letter -- Bill (Mr. Hassett) will give you copies of it -- to the members of the War Resources Board speaks for itself. It was sent to all of them. It thanks them for the fine spirit and patriotic offer of further services. We express our appreciation and hope that they will continue to act in an advisory capacity to the Munitions Board as it may request from time to time. You can get the list of people that it was sent to.

Q To whom was it sent?

THE PRESIDENT: To all of the members.

Q Does this mark the end of the Board?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, except, of course, they are still keeping on in an advisory capacity when called on.

I don't know why I should waste gas on you fellows. (The President turned off the ignition.)

Q Anything you can tell us about business and taxes? There was something on that before we left Washington.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't believe so because I haven't got any figures yet. Of course the objective is to cut down on all the expendi-

tures that we can properly cut down on at the present time.

Well, I will tell you what I can do: I will give you a story because you can raise a question for public discussion, which is always useful. Let us assume that we are able to cut appropriations and that Congress does not appropriate large sums not in the Budget as they did last year. That is quite an important point to make because that is not generally realized, that they ran over my budget about $350,000,000.

Assuming that a budgetary and appropriation cut is made, thereby -- oh, yes, and that tax revenues are very definitely increasing as far as we can tell now -- it means that you have a reduction of this year's deficit from two sources: first, an actual reduction in the budgetary appropriations and, secondly, an increase in taxes.

Now, here comes a question which is a good thing for public discussion. Undoubtedly, because of the world situation, we will have to appropriate a fairly large sum, more than we appropriated last year, for national defense. Let us assume that that sum would run to approximately $500,000,000. more than last year. Query: Should we borrow money to pay for it or should you pay as you go for emergency national defense?

If we borrow the money -- and it will have to be paid off sometime in the future -- it means no additional taxes this year. If we adopt the principle that national defense expenditures are a current item and bring back nothing into the Treasury except a few additional business taxes from profits, it means additional taxes. Shall we put it on future generations

or "pay as you go?" If we attempt to pay as you go, it would mean, of course, the levying of some form of emergency national defense tax or taxes.

Now, that is the first principle that the country ought to understand, ought to do some discussing about. I simply raise the question. It is a perfectly proper question to raise as a question. There has been nothing decided at all.

Q What form could that tax take?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not talking -- I am talking principle and principle can be spot news just as much as dollars and cents. Excuse the dirty dig, George. Do you see the point? It is really a matter of importance as to which way we will determine this question and, if it should be decided by the Congress that it should be in the form of additional taxes, then we would come to the question of what form the taxes should take, but not until it is decided.

Q As a matter of principle, have any national defense expenditures been on a "pay-as-you-go" basis?

THE PRESIDENT: They were, of course, during the war. In other words, we did not make it wholly pay-as-you-go; we borrowed a great deal of money but we also increased taxes a great deal.

Q It is an election year. Do you think that the Congress would be very anxious --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I should say, offhand, this is not a matter for politics but for principle rather than politics.

Q Does this imply that the Budget could be balanced next year, aside from national defense?

THE PRESIDENT: No, but if you get a reduction of appropriations, if you get increased taxes and if you took care of the increase in emergency national defense expenditures, you would have a very, very substantial decrease in the deficit. You would probably be able to cut it more than in half, which would be pretty good.

I do not mean "increased taxes"; I meant to say increased tax revenues.

Q That five hundred million increase in national defense, is that for sake of example or would it run about that much?

THE PRESIDENT: Run approximately that much. I mean that is only an approximate figure.

Q That would bring it up to $2,300,000,000.?

THE PRESIDENT: No, less than that.

Q I thought it was a billion eight or seven?

THE PRESIDENT: Not expenditures. There is another thing that people never quite understand. In other words, appropriations are not quite the same as expenditures.

Q That is largely the increase in personnel, is it not, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not at all; none of it.

Q I meant the additional half billion?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes, some of that. When you say "personnel," you mean enlisted men?

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Only I would not call it "personnel," because people would think it is additional civilians. It is additional people in uniform. It means additional civilians, of course, working

in factories.

Q Mr. President, this increased business volume: There is every indication of it continuing for some time, I take it?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not playing the market. (Laughter) I am being tough today, Felix, but it is all right.

Q I don't happen to play the market either but all the predictions I heard were that it is going to continue.

THE PRESIDENT: I am not very strong as a prognosticator this morning.

Q (Mr. Ralph Smith) A member of our Journal (Atlanta Journal) was up there when they set off that blast and he said that if you had as much gold as that assays, it would pay off the national deficit. That will assay $160,000. to the ton. (Presenting to the President a small piece of gold-bearing ore)

THE PRESIDENT: How much did they get out in the old days, all told?

Q John C. Calhoun took seven or eight million dollars out of there and Samuel J. Tilden took a world of gold. He sent his son down there to reform him and found out that he had found as much corn whiskey down there as in New York.

This (indicating a large sample of gold-bearing ore) is one that I cannot present to you. It contains an ounce of gold.

THE PRESIDENT: It may be pyrites.

Q (Mr. Smith) You can add that (the small sample) to your collection. That came from the second blast.

THE PRESIDENT: What was it, down below the old vein?

Q This is a new branch of the Calhoun vein.

THE PRESIDENT: Who is doing it?

Q A fellow named Major Dugas. He is a typical prospector who has been

down there for a long time.

THE PRESIDENT: This is up in North Georgia at Dahlonega, where the United States Government at one time had a mint.

Q (Mr. Smith) The first mint was there and any money which was stamped with a "D" has a tremendous premium with collectors.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, let's go up there. I know a lot of people who would like to get in on that.

Q I see the Highway Commission here and I want to ask you one in advance and that is about the fence and no fence law. That has to do with the cattle grazing at large on the new highway. The "no fence" means that the cattle cannot run at large but "fence" means that you keep the farm fenced up.

THE PRESIDENT: They are supposed to be fenced in?

Q It is a county question. They run all over in this county and in others they do not.

THE PRESIDENT: Generally you damage the cow more than the automobile.

Q If you hit a good sized cow it would bust you up. Some folks have been killed.

THE PRESIDENT: Generally that is quite late at night.

Q "No fence" means that the cattle cannot run at large but "fence" means you keep the farm fenced up.

THE PRESIDENT: The farms are supposed to be fenced up. I suppose they (the cows) run from one side to the other.

Q We do not know that they are yours, Mr. President; they do not have a brand on them.

THE PRESIDENT: Maybe Otis overslept.

Q You are going to be too busy to go to Pine Mountain Valley? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I had intended to ask you people what day you wanted to go.

Q Two weeks from next Wednesday. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: We have got a good black road part of the way now; it is a grand road.

Q If you promise to go over they will pave another one between now and Wednesday. (Laughter)

Q Are you going to dedicate that community center?

THE PRESIDENT: This afternoon at 3.15 and then tomorrow morning I think I have a Congressional delegation (from Georgia), probably to discuss the article by one Ralph Magill in this morning's Constitution -- "Problems of the State of Georgia."

Q We have plenty of them and they won't be able to put them to you in a few minutes.

THE PRESIDENT: They are some problems.

Q You are not going to go home next Wednesday if you are going to take up all of Georgia's problems. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No, that is right.

Q Mr. President, how long are you going to be in Asheville on the way back?

THE PRESIDENT: About two hours. I will go and see Mac (Mr. McIntyre) first and then go and see Miss Durand.

Q That is the entire program?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. It will be dark, you know -- after dark. I do not get there until after six o'clock.

Q There is a story printed in Philadelphia yesterday that Governor Earle has been considered for a diplomatic appointment?

THE PRESIDENT: There has not been any consideration for any of them. There are four or five vacancies but we have not taken it up at all.

Q Also there were stories that three or four ambassadors were being called home for consultation?

THE PRESIDENT: That was not Felix's (Mr. Belair's) fault; it was all right.

Q I am not blaming it on Felix.

THE PRESIDENT: Felix was clean on that. No, as a matter of fact, Joe Kennedy told me some time ago that he wanted to come home and spend Christmas at home. He asked if he could come and we said it would be all right if things are quiet. If conditions get worse, he will take the clipper back. Joe Davies, for the same reason. They both asked; they were not summoned.

Q Davies is also coming for Christmas?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. TROHAN: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't believe there is really any news at all. We leave here Tuesday morning or Wednesday morning -- I do not know which. It depends a little on the weather and things in Washington. Make it Wednesday, if we can.

Q It would be all right with me a week from Wednesday.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not believe we will go to Pine Mountain Valley or anywhere else. We will just stay right here.

Q It is a pretty nice place.

THE PRESIDENT: I hope you win that tournament this year.
Q (Mr. Belair) Not much chance.
THE PRESIDENT: George Fox is out. He got eliminated, so I think you have a good chance.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #601,
Held in front of the Veeder Cottage,
Warm Springs Foundation, Warm Springs, Georgia,
November 28, 1939, 11.30 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Anything doing? It is a completely dead day. It is a lovely day and too fine a day for you people to sit indoors and write stories.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. (Laughter)

Q Can we go to Pine Mountain Valley Saturday?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that is all right.

Q I wish we were. I could even take that.

THE PRESIDENT: I almost went yesterday.

Q Have you any callers?

THE PRESIDENT: Have I, Bill (Mr. Hassett)?

MR. HASSETT: I think none, Mr. President.

Q Have you gotten any reaction?

THE PRESIDENT: Any what?

Q Reaction to your suggestion the other day about the pay-as-you-go?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, it was not a suggestion, because a suggestion connotes that we have made up our minds. It was just something to talk about, something to discuss.

I have read a lot of newspaper comments, editorials, et cetera. It is all to the good. The more we have the better.

Q The editorials have been very favorable to the idea?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, off the record, I suppose the stupidest editorial was the Times.

Q Belair (Mr. Felix Belair) did not write it.

THE PRESIDENT: Did you read it? It was terrible. This is all off the record. It was the dumbest editorial I have ever seen. In other words, it said, "We cannot have this deficit. It is awful to continue having a deficit and, after all, everything that goes into a deficit should be treated in the same way, whether it is for relief or armament or anything of that kind. Why, therefore, try to segregate one portion of the deficit and put a tax on to pay it?"

That, of course, goes right back to the same silly old story of people who say, "We have got to balance the Budget by having no deficit and the only way to do it is to spend less money." Then you get hold of either of the Arthurs, Krock or Sulzberger, and you say, "There it is. What do you recommend should be cut out?" "Oh," they say, "oh, it is not my business."

I will say, "Are you in favor of no more expenditures for armaments this year?" "Far be it from me to say that."

Then I will say, "Are you in favor of stopping all relief expenditures?" "Far be it from me to say that."

That is the attitude of most of the "fat cat" papers in the United States. That is all off the record. Isn't that right?

Q Vinson (Representative Vinson of Georgia) told me that the Georgia delegation is unanimously in favor of a tax for special armaments.

THE PRESIDENT: I saw that. But I hate "holier than thou" attitudes, where you are planning about this, that and the other thing and say, "What would you do?" and then you get no answer. Isn't that right, Ralph (Mr. Smith)?

Q (Mr. Smith) Yes, it is.

Q (Mr. Trohan) I would get a headache.

Q Mr. President, the Treasury announced in Washington yesterday a new five hundred million dollar financing with a new distribution method to favor small investors. There were some reports that you were particularly interested in that in your capacity as Senior Warden of the church at Hyde Park because the church has money to invest.

THE PRESIDENT: We are not buying any of these two per cent bonds. We are buying baby bonds.

The point is this: As we all know, in these bond issues in the last six years -- well, if any of us happened to receive a legacy in cash or had saved up something and we had five thousand dollars it is practically impossible for us to take a portion of any of those bond issues. The Treasury does not take any interest in us and if we still want to buy the issue we go to some of the larger people who have bought those bonds and we have to pay a point and a half premium for them. We are working on plans to let the small subscriber get his portion, 100%, because they are nearly always oversubscribed six to ten times. If a small fellow applies for five thousand dollars, let him get that.

Q It is always hard, too, is it not, Mr. President, to handle a hundred small ones rather than five large ones? It is costly business?

THE PRESIDENT: Very little difference -- infinitesimal -- about one-tenth of one per cent.

Q I see you lost a good friend yesterday, down here?

THE PRESIDENT: I was awfully sorry about old Jake. Well, I guess --

Q (interposing) Who is that?

Q Jake Jarrell.

THE PRESIDENT: Old Jake was one of the first people I saw down here. When I got here in September -- I think it was 1924 -- old Tom Loyless met me at the train and we went up to this cottage, the Hart Cottage, right here (indicating) and Jake was on the steps to meet me.

Q Mr. President, is there anything you can tell us about your conference with Mr. Smith (the Director of the Budget)?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so. It was just like all the previous ones of the last six weeks.

Q We had him down at the cottage and he talks more than Danny Bell did but there is less news in it.

THE PRESIDENT: I will tell you what we did yesterday: We did Justice and Treasury.

Q And Panama Canal, wasn't it?

THE PRESIDENT: Panama Canal, yes. We did the usual thing. I trimmed a good deal but, when you come to dollars and cents, of course it does not look like an awful lot. Here is the process: This year -- about every four years -- somebody has to trim the payroll in any department that is doing normal work with nothing new -- no new functions -- trim it back and cut out the increases of positions that have slid -- slipped in in the previous two or three years. So I did what I call a "rule of thumb." This only applies, of course, to bureaus that are doing no new work, no new functions, that are going on doing the same work they did last year and the year before. I would take the total of this fiscal year and just put a rule of thumb on it and cut out for the next fiscal year

perhaps one or two positions which had grown in. For instance, on a bureau that costs three hundred thousand dollars a year to run I would take out three thousand dollars. Well, that means two positions -- two $1500 positions -- and that would cut them back to $297,000.

Well, in dollars and cents that cannot amount to an awful lot but it is a good thing for Government to prune the tree.

Q Mr. Smith told us yesterday that the Navy budget is already up.

THE PRESIDENT: That is only the regular budget.

Q I wondered about that because I thought most of the increase would go to the Army.

THE PRESIDENT: What I am doing is more of a mechanical thing than anything else. I am putting in what I call a "B" budget for increases in national defense so that there will be the regular Navy "A" budget, which would be what we would have recommended if there had not been a war. The same thing for the Army; the same thing for the Coast Guard and the same thing for the F.B.I. As best we can we are trying to put in a "B" budget for things that are caused by our neutrality position and the fact of a war. That is not finished yet.

Q That will be very late?

THE PRESIDENT: That is the thing that I said the other day at a rough guess will run around five hundred million.

Q And then relief will go up as usual when you get the picture?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes; we will take that up --

Q (interposing) In the spring?

THE PRESIDENT: No. We are putting in the regular thing for relief. Again, we hope it will last; we hope it will do for the year. We might have to add when we get our April survey, but I hope not.

Q What do you mean by "the regular thing?"

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q You say you are putting in "the regular thing." Can you amplify on that?

THE PRESIDENT: When it is made about the middle of December we will make a recommendation for a total sum for relief which we hope will last through the following fiscal year but we have to remember that we are making this estimate in December for relief that won't start until the following July -- seven months later -- and therefore it must, of necessity, be considered the best guess we can make as of that time.

Q Mr. President, there have been indications that by July first relief spending will be on a basis of about a billion dollars a year. Do you think it can be held down to that total?

THE PRESIDENT: Have they given out, Harrington or Carmody, any allocation for the months to come?

Q I cannot say.

THE PRESIDENT: They have got one and I could not tell you what it is but it is based on the usual. Relief now is pretty well down to about a million six hundred thousand -- a million, seven or a million, eight hundred thousand people. You had better check on this -- that is why I asked you the question as to whether they have given

out anything. It will rise, as it always does, in the winter time in order to prevent too great hardships. It will rise in December, January, February and stay pretty high, up around, I think, two million or two million, one, and then slide off as the weather begins getting better. It happens every year. There is nothing new in it. It is the normal thing.

Q Any indications at this time -- have you and Mr. Smith made any measurements as to how far this industrial upswing will go? How much in additional revenues it will bring?

THE PRESIDENT: No. We will get the revenue estimates from the Treasury about the fifteenth of December for the following year and the balance of this fiscal year and we will get a final checkup, as usual, from them about Christmas Day.

Q About a week before it goes up?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, about a week before it goes up and then it goes to the printer. We hold it until the last Monday.

Q What day does it go up?

THE PRESIDENT: It goes up the day before I go up on the Hill myself. In other words, some years I have gone up with the Annual Message on the third of January.

Q The third is on Monday this (coming) year. (Note: The third of January, 1940, will fall on a Wednesday.)

THE PRESIDENT: They always meet on the third, not the first. Some years I have gone up on the third and some years on the fourth.

Q It will be the fifth at the latest?

THE PRESIDENT: The Budget will go up the day after I go to the Congress. That is almost an intimation -- you won't have to ask me -- that I expect to read the Message in person. I think it is a safe guess.

Q Up at the Community House you tossed out another piece of bait to us and we leaped out and took it.

THE PRESIDENT: Don't they have a good time?

MRS. LORD: They don't miss a trick.

THE PRESIDENT: They don't miss a trick. I am having just as good a time as you are, so it is all right.

Q We will bite every time.

THE PRESIDENT: The family tells me that I take an unholy pleasure in doing this to you.

Q I think so, too.

THE PRESIDENT: I do, too. Well, after all, you have to get a certain number of words over the wire, don't you?

Q Sometimes we can do without them.

Q Some day it is going to come, just like before Landon's meeting in Kansas.

THE PRESIDENT: Which was that?

Q Up in Hyde Park, when you announced that you were going to meet with the various governors on drought relief.

THE PRESIDENT: Including Brother Landon? (Laughter)

MRS. LORD: Brother Landon. That is good.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I will tell you what -- do you want something to speculate about?

Q Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: I will try to give you something and I will invent as I go along. Don't, for Heaven's sake, attribute this to me, otherwise the whole thing is off but what you can say is this: "It is understood from high sources" -- you are a high source, Bill (Mr.

Hassett) -- "that a number of people who have seen the President recently have made the interesting suggestion that both conventions in 1940 be deferred for a month or a month and a half on the general theory that a campaign, especially in these times of international crisis, which lasts through July, August, September, October and into November bores the country to death. It never gets under way, actually, until much before September."

Well, that is the suggestion that comes to me -- literally that is true -- from a number of different sources. It would save money to both parties and headquarters would not have to be opened so soon. During July and August so many people are away and they are not very much interested. You don't get very far with campaigns in those two months.

You know, for instance, that I never campaigned until very late. I always had very short campaigns. In 1932 I think I started west about the thirtieth of August -- something like that -- and in 1936 I didn't start until September --

Q (interposing) September thirtieth.

THE PRESIDENT: September thirtieth.

Q It also helps Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think it has anything to do with Congress because Congress, both those years, was in session during the conventions.

Q This year it would help.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so. I don't think that is a factor at all.

Q If they remained in session it would help.

THE PRESIDENT: That is a pure pipe dream.

Q Have your suggestions been given to Farley or Hamilton or any of those people in authority?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of. It would shorten the campaign and save money. Make the thing short and sweet, with a kick in it. Isn't there something in that, Ralph (Mr. Smith)?

Q (Mr. Smith) I think there is a whole lot in it. It would save a lot of money and a lot of trouble, too.

Q There hasn't been any suggestion, Mr. President, as to which convention will be held first?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Again, from the same suggestive sources, toss a coin. (Laughter) Why not? Why take them so seriously? Why write so much about them?

Q We have to write about something.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, there is something for you to write on.

Q It is a good story.

THE PRESIDENT: I think it is an interesting suggestion. Not that I have espoused it or anything like that.

Q No -- high sources in Warm Springs.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I haven't made up my mind one way or the other. Again, like this tax business, it is worth talking about. Well, I guess I have to swim.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #602,
Executive Offices of the White House,
December 1, 1939, 10.40 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: How is everybody?

Q Fine, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: You look rather pale, all of you.

Q Too much Thanksgivings. I had to go to the doctor.

THE PRESIDENT: I think you have put on five pounds, I really do.

Q I certainly have.

Q Are you trying to freeze us out? (All of the doors to the grounds were open.)

THE PRESIDENT: Is it too cold? You are working too hard. Get out and play golf and tennis -- something like that.

Q When?

THE PRESIDENT: All the time there is.

MR. EARLY: Friday morning.

Q Yes, Friday morning, Tuesday afternoon and Mondays.

Q Six o'clock at the Dies Committee last night.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, No. 1: I signed last night an Executive Order which will please all of you, excusing Federal employees from duty on December twenty-third, the Saturday before Christmas, and December thirtieth, which is the Saturday before New Years.

And I got Steve to mimeograph for you -- you will have it when you go out -- a little statement about the Finland situation. (Reading)

"The news of the Soviet naval and military bombings within Finnish territory has come as a

profound shock to the Government and people of the United States. Despite efforts made to solve the dispute by peaceful methods to which no reasonable objection could be offered, one power has chosen to resort to force of arms. It is tragic to see the policy of force spreading, and to realize that wanton disregard for law is still on the march. All peace-loving peoples in those nations that are still hoping for the continuance of relations throughout the world on the basis of law and order will unanimously condemn this new resort to military force as the arbiter of international differences.

"To the great misfortune of the world, the present trend to force makes insecure the independent existence of small nations in every continent and jeopardizes the rights of mankind to self-government. The people and government of Finland have a long, honorable and wholly peaceful record which has won for them the respect and warm regard of the people and Government of the United States."

That is all the news there is.

Q Mr. President, may I revert to this December twenty-third, December thirtieth? I do not know whether you have taken it seriously or not, but one of our friends, Charlie Hamilton, has reached the White House with the suggestion that you advance the pay day. The boys will be broke by December thirtieth. (Laughter) I wonder, has that reached you at all?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Have you heard anything of it, Steve (Mr. Early)?

MR. EARLY: No, sir. I heard it on the air many mornings. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Did you take the precaution of getting the opinion of the Attorney General?

Q I got an opinion -- not the Attorney General's but the curbstone opinion, of course, of Mr. Forster.

THE PRESIDENT: Did Rudolph say it was all right?

Q Rudolph said it would be all right except that paymasters, in the

case of employees who had died before the proper date, would be personally responsible.

THE PRESIDENT: Is that all?

Q Yes, sir.

Q Mr. President, can anything be said about the application of the American neutrality law in the invasion of Finland?

THE PRESIDENT: No; nothing.

Q There is a great deal of agitation, as far as I can hear, for the withdrawal of recognition of Russia or, rather, the severance of diplomatic relations?

THE PRESIDENT: There is no news.

Q We have a so-called moral embargo, a policy against selling war planes to countries which use them to bomb civilian centers. Would that apply to discourage shipments to Russia in this instance?

THE PRESIDENT: You know, we have a note over there at the present time which has never been answered in regard to bombing civilian population from the air. I think, until we receive a reply, there isn't much can be said.

Q Mr. President, has Finland answered that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think so. You had better check with the State Department. No, I am wrong, it was a note of good offices which they answered. No, they have not answered it yet. They are in process of being bombed and of course they have not got around to it.

Q Has Russia answered the note?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Is there anything you can tell us about the Minister of Finland?

He called yesterday --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Why, I guess he told all of you people the same thing he told me.

Q He did not tell us very much.

Q Anything you can tell us about the calling back of Ambassador Steinhardt for consultation?

THE PRESIDENT: No. You see, this is just for background, we know so little about the actual happenings every moment over there that we cannot do anything until we get more positive information. Most of our information, just like the press information, is coming out when and if you can get a telephone through, either to Estonia or to Stockholm. All of our information is extremely fragmentary.

Q Do you plan to discuss this situation with the Congressional leaders?

THE PRESIDENT: Probably.

Q Have you asked them to meet you?

THE PRESIDENT: Either by telephone --

Q (interposing) I thought they might be called to the White House for a conference.

THE PRESIDENT: No, nothing formal like that. We can accomplish just as much, sometimes, another way.

Q Have you asked them to meet with you yet?

THE PRESIDENT: I have already answered the question.

Q Will you change your plans for tomorrow?

THE PRESIDENT: I may. In other words, if I give up going to the football game, I will also give up going to Hyde Park over Sunday.

Q Are you going, or what are you going to put on the walls here when you give those pictures to the Library?

THE PRESIDENT: Do you think that is subtle? May (Miss Craig), you must have stayed awake two nights thinking of that. (Laughter)

Q The doctor said she ought to sleep eight to ten hours every night.

Q When the Dominican Republic President, Mr. Trujillo (referring to General Trujillo, Chief of Staff of the Army of the Dominican Republic), was in Washington, the Dominican Legation issued a biographical sketch of him in which it stated that, after he had served two terms, he would eschew a third term in deference to the United States' tradition. I would like to ask you, sir, if you welcome that interpretation? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, possibly, if you would stay after, I will tell you something about Santo Domingo, solely for your own ears. It is very confidential and off the record but it is a friendly republic and I can only do it that way.

Q Thank you.

Q Mr. President, the National Power Policy Committee has formulated an electric power grid system which they are going to begin conferences on next week or this week. Do you approve of that proposed plan for setting up Government stand-by steam plants, et cetera?

THE PRESIDENT: That is not in that plan.

Q It has been published?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. There is an awful lot of perfect rot that has been written because -- well, let me give you an illustration: Somebody the other day talked about a Message of mine to the Con-

gress, I think in June, May or June, 1938, in which I recommended the setting up of some nine, something like that, regional planning authorities. Well, there is no story in what I am going to tell you; it is just that the thing won't happen too frequently again.

Back in 1932 I was tremendously interested by George Norris' plan and desire to use the power of the Tennessee River. That was in 1932. In January, 1933, after I had been elected but before I came to Washington, I went down to Wilson Dam and Wheeler Dam to look over what had been done. George Norris went with me and we talked about his plan for developing water power in the Tennessee Valley. I went on down to Warm Springs and there were some of you people, I think, went down with me. George Durno was there. We had a very interesting one-hour talk -- this was January, 1933 -- relating to the development of the Tennessee Watershed, the development covering civil engineering and human engineering. The Norris Plans for water power development were incorporated into that plan but, actually, I suppose the water power end did not amount to more than ten or fifteen per cent of the total plan. In other words, we were talking about soil erosion, planting trees, bringing people out of the hills where they were living in abject poverty, and giving them all a chance to make a living. We talked about bringing in young, small industries into the small communities of the whole watershed, stopping floods, improving highways, transportation, waterways -- in other words, doing a great human engineering plan for the entire watershed of the Tennessee as an experimental matter.

If the thing worked, the idea was that the Government, over a very long period of years, would extend it to other watersheds.

Well, the effect on the population of that watershed after we began the work in 1933 began to be so encouraging in its results that by 1938 I thought the time had come to set up whatever the number was -- seven, eight or nine -- regional planning areas, one on the Atlantic Seaboard, one on the Texas, the Gulf area, one on the Upper Missouri, one down in Southern California, one in the Northwest to cover Bonneville and Coulee, et cetera, just so we could plan for further extension of human engineering in other parts of the United States.

Well, water power in that thing was a very, very minor portion of the planning. Very large areas had no water power; for example, the Ohio, there is very little water power concerned in that particular development. There was very little concerned in the rivers running into the Gulf. And yet somebody, the other day, comes out and refers to that Message as asking for nine power authorities. In other words, it is a deliberate -- because it is a man -- it must be deliberate -- it is a deliberate perversion of actual fact.

I suppose the time will come when we will do human planning for a good many other parts of the United States. When Joe Robinson was alive, he begged me to make the next experiment in the Arkansas because of the great length of the river. There is very little power, for example, in that. The Arkansas goes clear back through Oklahoma and Kansas and clear on into Colorado and way up to the Continental Divide, way back of the Royal Gorge, which is

the Colorado River, and the matter of water power in that case is practically nothing.

In other words, it is obviously a perfectly definite and deliberate effort to becloud human engineering by trying to make a controversy out of this power question.

Now, on the question you asked about, this particular study that is being made, I suppose the easiest way to put it is this: that in the event of our getting into war, we probably would have to connect up, by main transmission lines, a number of the great private systems and also the T. V. A. water power. It would be a tie-up between them so that power could be shifted from one locality to the other as needed. As I understand, the original report, they did talk about stand-by plans. In case of war we probably would have to have stand-by plans, steam plans, but in view of the fact that we do not, any of us, expect to be in war, I do not believe that matter is going to be considered at all.

On the question of connecting links, main transmission links, I think probably that private companies will be able to do that themselves without having to spend Government money on it and, if there is a question of needing money to build these tie-ins and they cannot raise the money in Wall Street, I suggest they go see Jesse Jones. I think that probably is all we need to do at this time. There is no immediate emergency.

Q How about the St. Lawrence development? Is that involved in this?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I think that is an entirely separate thing. Of course on the St. Lawrence, it just shows the change that comes

about. It was about three years ago we were talking about it last. There really was a question as to whether we needed a large additional block of power at that time. Today, with the definite upturn in manufacturing, both in the United States and Canada, it looks more and more important that we start work as soon as we can to develop more power for both countries. There is not actually a shortage but a potential future shortage.

Q Mr. President, do you favor continuation of the Dies Committee?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Do you favor continuation of the Dies Committee, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, wouldn't you say that that was a matter for the Congress to determine? Don't you think that Congress has a right to set up a dozen of them, simultaneously, if they want them? I do.

Q Will your legislative program be long or short, the next session of Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: It depends on the definition.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #603,
Executive Offices of the White House,
December 5, 1939, 4.05 P.M.

THE PRESIDENT: What do I hear? I hear female voices approaching.

Q Lady reporters.

THE PRESIDENT: Members of the White House Correspondents' Association?

Q No, sir. May (Miss Craig), have you any more trick questions?

THE PRESIDENT: Were you sitting up all night again?

Q (Miss Craig) I am crushed.

THE PRESIDENT: It is all right. I saw there was a box in the paper about it. It complimented you.

Q It was good.

Q The answer would have been better. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: May (Miss Craig), don't you think one of those great big folio photographs of you, with your autograph on it, will go nice up there? (Indicating left-hand wall of office) (Laughter)

Q (Miss Craig) That was subtle, too.

THE PRESIDENT: I am so sleepy. I think it is this damned air-cooling system.

Q How about Pa Watson?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, he has been asleep half the day. He will keep doing that (yawning) and catching a snore on the fly.

Q (Mr. Young) I went over to see Bill Hassett. He is coming along fine and enjoyed your letter very much.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Somebody will probably ask the question about the Finnish debt. I have taken it up with the Treasury Department. Of course

we do not know anything about it except the press items reporting that the Finnish Legation has indicated that its Government intends to make payments on the due date, which is December fifteenth, and the amount is $234,693.

Of course, legally, if and when that is tendered to the Treasury, the Secretary of the Treasury has to accept it. I have asked the Secretary of the Treasury and he has agreed that he will place it in a suspense account -- it is only a matter of two or three weeks anyway -- and that I would so inform the Congress after they get back here the third of January, with a recommendation that they take up the question of whether, by Congressional action, the use of it should not be changed from covering it into the general fund to some purpose for the benefit of the Finnish people.

I have not got to the point of knowing whether I will make a specific recommendation, either in regard to that amount or previous payments over the last four or five years, but at least this is a step indicating that the matter will be placed before the Congress at the earliest part of the session.

Q Mr. President, I did not get the significance of your remark about the last four or five years.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the suggestion has been made, you know, that we should make available to the Finnish people more than this payment or, in other words, some of the back payments that have been made.

Q You cannot cancel the rest of the debt, can you, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I cannot do anything under the law except to turn it over to the Secretary of the Treasury.

Q How about future payments, Mr. President? Would that likely be ad-

justed too?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, not that I know of. This is just an immediate pending question.

Q What did you have in mind as to the use to which this money might be put?

THE PRESIDENT: That is just exactly what I said. I said I could not go into details because I do not know. We will talk it over, though, with Congress.

Q Is there anything you can tell us at this time about the severance of diplomatic relations with Russia?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, there is no news today. I do not know about the future. Of course things are happening all the time. In regard to the general method of handling the foreign policy from day to day, I am inclined to think that it must be pretty good -- what the Secretary of State is doing I think must be pretty good and I think it must have the general approval of the great mass of the American people for one rather obvious reason. The suggestions are coming in large part, the criticisms and accusations are coming in large part from two sources: first, the Soviet press, a portion of the Nazi press and our little friend, I have forgotten his name, who is now publicity agent of the Republican National Committee. (Laughter) And also the Hearst papers. They are all substantially in accord in attacking the foreign policy of the American Government.

And then, on the other side of the picture, a few statesmen in Russia and, I think, Germany and a comparatively small number of politically-minded people in the House and Senate of the United

States.

So, on the whole, as between those two sources, abroad and here, I would say probably that the foreign policy must be pretty good.

Q Does that mean a continuation of relations with Russia must be pretty good?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I have answered that question before -- there is no change today.

Q Would you include Mr. Hoover in that last category, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think I need expand. I think it rather speaks for itself.

Q Mr. Secretary -- (laughter) -- Mr. President, is there anything you can tell us today with regard to applying the neutrality law to Finland and Russia?

THE PRESIDENT: No, nothing on that today. Of course -- let me give you just this for background and not for attribution in any way: You do have to consider that there are efforts being made at the present time, some of them you do not even know about, for the beginning of negotiations looking towards peace or towards the end of hostilities. There are different forces on the other side. We have nothing -- we are not participating any more than what we have already done but there are various efforts being made and the situation -- this again only for background -- is not yet completely hopeless. That is why I do not think we should do anything to upset any applecarts that may be in the making.

Q You mean, of course, just Russia and Finland -- not just France and England?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q The thought that there is not declared to be a war, there is less likelihood of being one?

THE PRESIDENT: That is too hypothetical and too far off.

Q That it is not declared formally by the United States to be a war, that there is a chance of escaping a full-fledged war?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you are narrowing it down. I think we have to be more general than to make any categorical statements of that kind.

Q Referring again to the Finnish debt matter, have the Finns made any request themselves for any assistance in that regard?

THE PRESIDENT: Absolutely none. Purely and wholly initiated by this Government.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. President.

Q Mr. President -- (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Who is next?

Q In that connection, do you believe that the Russians might properly consider that as an unneutral act in any respect?

THE PRESIDENT: No. How?

Q Here is a debt that the Finns owe us and we set it aside in a suspense account with the idea that Congress may consider using that fund for the Finnish people who have been attacked by Russia.

THE PRESIDENT: Not necessarily. Now you are presupposing that we would use that money to pay for airplanes to send over to Finland.

Q I was not presupposing that at all, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: You must have been, or something along that line. Suppose, for the sake of argument, we were to take care of Finnish

refugees, Finnish wounded? There is a little illustration that just proves the question. There are lots of ways it could be used in a perfectly neutral way.

Q Can you tell us anything about the prosecution of foreign aliens who have been violating the Federal law?

THE PRESIDENT: No, except that it is getting on pretty well. The Attorney General is working on it.

Q The Coast Guard, about half an hour ago, revealed that they had picked up for the Justice Department a 43-foot yawl just off Wrightsville Beach, near Wilmington. It has also revealed that it had a German crew aboard. Further than that they have been very quiet.

THE PRESIDENT: I have not heard; I had better check.

Q You have heard of the death of Santiago Iglesias, the Puerto Rican Commissioner?

THE PRESIDENT: I can say that I am awfully sorry to hear about it. He was a very good friend of mine and I had known him for many years.

Q Referring to the question asked last week about public power policy, Secretary Ickes suggested this morning that there was a likelihood of a high power transmission system hooking up several power areas of the United States and also that there should be increased generation. He has hinted in his remarks to the utility people present that the Government may have to step in on both of these, if industry did not. Can you clear that up for us, please?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the easiest way is to tell you what I was just talking to Mr. Scattergood about. As you know, there is this problem

of connecting links between privately owned transmission lines. In England they found that because these private companies were serving different localities, it was awfully difficult for the private companies not to have a fight between themselves if and when they managed a jointly owned connecting link. In other words, it was not a smooth running method of operation. So, as I remember it, the British organized some kind -- one of those things that they have, a half-and-half Government-private control of a company to build and operate, for the benefit of the private companies, connecting links, with a joint management, and each of the private companies using these connecting links paid an equitable charge for the use of the connecting links. In England it is working very well.

As I understand it, they are studying a proposition of that kind, to have those connecting links built over here.

I used to Scattergood the illustration of all the railroads running into Chicago (in the old days) when each one had its own railroad and owned freight depots and everything else. Somebody came along and built the Chicago Belt Line, I think it was, which serves all the other roads and all the roads pay to it a fee, a charge for the use of this connecting railroad that runs from the east side -- from the north side of Chicago around the city to the south side of Chicago and serves all roads. There is nothing startling in that, it is merely a matter of working out a system by which these connecting transmission lines can be built for the benefit of the private companies on all sides of them.

MR. GODWIN: Again, thank you, sir.

Q Mr. President, any idea of the cost of such a program?

THE PRESIDENT: Any what?

Q The cost?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, no; only in the initial study stage.

Q Would it be necessary, in this country, to have joint management of the connecting links? Management by the Government?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, except that we know it has worked awfully well in other places.

Q Mr. President, did Scattergood take up with you the matter of revision of the Boulder Canyon Act?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Earl again says, "Thank you very much."

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #604,
Executive Offices of the White House,
December 8, 1939, 10.50 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: These girls don't know what they missed last night.

Q May (Miss Craig) has another question.

THE PRESIDENT: Sitting up too late?

Q All night.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Nice speech last night; nice talk.

THE PRESIDENT: I took it off the back of the menu. I wrote down some notes.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Very nice; very happy. I hope you feel all right. I felt all right up to the time I got up this morning.

THE PRESIDENT: I did not get enough sleep. There was a bunch of stuff from the State Department last night and I sat up until about 2.00 o'clock.

Q There were a lot of inquiries as to whether you had ptomaine poisoning.

THE PRESIDENT: It was all right and I ate a little of everything. Aren't they all in yet?

Q Not quite; there is a big house.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I am sorry to be late but it is all the fault of Joe Kennedy (Ambassador Kennedy). He came in this morning at the crack of dawn. We have been talking ever since. And we will talk some more this afternoon.

You gentlemen had better be on your good behavior because inevitably there will be comparisons with interviews with the British

Press and today's Conference. Be careful.

Outside of that I know nothing. One of the things we talked about this morning goes back to the old question of American ships and the Ambassador is taking up today or tomorrow with the Maritime Commission the thing we have been working on for some time, and for which, I suppose, the only thing I can say is that we are making progress. That is the general idea -- I think I spoke of it about a month ago -- trying to use some of these American flag ships in foreign trade runs in other parts of the world, outside of the war areas -- taking over a certain amount of carrying of goods which are now being carried by belligerent ships, merchant ships. We hope that that will give employment to some of the ships that have been laid up, that formerly ran to belligerent ports.

Q Mr. President, did you and the Ambassador speak of something which I think I saw in one of the earlier dispatches today, the question of southern wood, southern lumber?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. That also was being talked about, whether we cannot get use for some of our southern pine for shipment to belligerent ports.

Q Mr. President, on the use of ships, the last time you talked about it you said some of these ships might be used for the so-called barter arrangement on cotton and tin, et cetera. Can you discuss that?

THE PRESIDENT: We are doing a little -- we haven't got very far, Pete (Mr. Brandt), not as far as we do hope to get. That is a thing I meant to speak to Joe (Ambassador Kennedy) about this morning but we haven't got to that item.

Q Will the matter of ship transfers become a matter of discussion between the United States and Great Britain?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q In taking over the trade routes, would it be by agreement?

THE PRESIDENT: I would not say agreement but, if certain lines are to be abandoned by belligerents, we hope to be able to be there, to know about it and take over the work during the continuation of the war.

Q Are those lines between American and neutral ports?

THE PRESIDENT: No, mostly between neutral ports and neutral ports -- non-American. That is the objective.

Q Mr. President, there is an Ohio relief situation which is rather complicated and difficult to explain unless you go into it. Have you seen it in the newspapers or have you anything to say about it?

THE PRESIDENT: I asked yesterday for a memorandum on it from Colonel Harrington. I have got it here and there is no reason why Steve (Mr. Early) should not give it to you. The gist of it is -- well, in the first place -- let us put it this way. Let us clarify the thing.

A good many years ago -- I do not know what, six years, seven years -- there has been a perfectly definite allocation of responsibility in the United States. The Federal Government has assumed to take care of, as much as possible -- it does not mean one hundred per cent but it is a pretty high percentage -- of workers, of needy people who are able to work and want to work. They have to be three things: They have got to be needy; they have got to

want to work and have got to be able to work. The Federal Government has taken care of the overwhelming majority of those people. That is the Federal job.

At the same time, it has been the Government policy that what we call home relief people -- those are needy people who cannot work for one reason or another -- and the responsibility of taking care of those Americans has been definitely established as being on the state. Now, that does not mean that the policy -- that it is on the states as local governments. It is on the states. Why? Because local governments are creatures of the states. They have a system of local government in almost every state in the Union. That is not our business. But the primary responsibility for the non-W.P.A. cases, that is, needy people who cannot work, is on the states.

Some states have one method of working it out with their municipalities and other states have other methods of working out the procedure with their municipalities. When I say, "municipalities," I mean townships, as we call them in the North, or the county system of government as they have it in the South. We have counties all over the United States except in Louisiana where they have parishes, which is the same thing. I mean incorporated villages, cities, boroughs, et cetera.

It is not the concern of the Federal Government as to how it is done. It is the responsibility of the state and that means the governor and the legislature of each state. Therefore this Ohio situation concerns primarily home relief cases. It is solely a matter for the State of Ohio, and how the Governor and the Legis-

lature work it out, or the City of Cleveland or the City of Toledo or any other cities in Ohio, is not our business. In other words, we are proceeding in an absolutely constitutional way and putting that burden up to the states.

Now on this particular Ohio situation, the controversy in regard to home relief cases is between the cities of Ohio and the State Government. We are maintaining and retaining this well-established principle, which has been in our laws now for six or seven years. However, we have added, in Cleveland, a good many Federal projects. Those are to take care of people who are in need and can work -- six thousand new jobs. That comes pretty close to taking care of the people who are in need and can work but it does not solve the problem of thousands and thousands of people who are in need and cannot work. Therefore, all we can say is that the responsibility of the people in Cleveland and these other cities is on the State of Ohio.

This memorandum, as you can see -- Steve (Mr. Early) will give it to you -- has a comparison of what two contiguous states have done, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Ohio has six million people, Pennsylvania nine million people. In 1939, the relief expenditures in Ohio were $7,000,000. and in Pennsylvania $33,000,000. Now, these are not Federal, these are state figures. Do not get the thing mixed up. This is what states are doing for their home relief cases.

Q Will you read those again, please, seven and --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Seven and thirty-three. The average general relief benefits, that is, home relief benefits, per case

in October, 1939, in Ohio was $16. and in Pennsylvania, $27., which goes to show that the State of Ohio has not taken care of home relief cases half as well as the State of Pennsylvania.

That is about where the thing stops. The responsibility for those cases is on the state. That is all there is to be said about it, that they have failed to carry out what we consider to be their responsibility under the established policy for the last six or seven years.

Q Where did you say the figures came from, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: These are home relief expenditures, July to October, 1939.

Q July to October?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

(At this point Mr. Early spoke to the President.)

Steve (Mr. Early) suggests another thing, although, frankly, it is a drop in the bucket. Under the general policy of doing everything we can to keep people from starving, we are sending in surplus commodities, the Federal Government, to those places in Pennsylvania (Ohio?). In other words, we are doing more than the original policy. Now, of course, people cannot live on our surplus commodities; we know that. Those are apples and some cereals.

Q There are no strings placed on the use of those surplus commodities? They are both Federal and home relief?

THE PRESIDENT: They are only used on home relief cases, because the Federal relief cases are getting money.

Q Does the memorandum show what percentage of Ohio's needy employables are being cared for by the Federal Government?

THE PRESIDENT: No. But, just as a guess, I would say probably a higher percentage of the needy employables in Ohio than the average of the states.

Q Mr. President, did you discuss the Cuban sugar situation with Secretary Wallace yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, we did, and with the State Department. I asked them to give me a memorandum. I would put it whis way, that at the present time nothing has been concluded but there is a serious doubt as to the advisability of restoring the quota system under present conditions. On the Cuban sugar phase of it, there are certain international obligations which, of course, have to be carried out in accordance not only with the letter but the spirit of them. That is about all there is to say now because nothing has been concluded.

Q Mr. President, on this Ohio situation, do you know whether the Ohio authorities, the State authorities, have denied or acknowledged their responsibility for unemployables?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that is like saying, "Was this national policy seven years ago based on a contract between, say, the State and the Federal Government?" Of course that is tommyrot. The Congress of the United States said, "We will take care of employables." Every state in the Union has proceeded -- even some of the poorest states -- along the line of taking care of their unemployables, every single state, and that has been going on for six or seven years, including Ohio.

Q You speak of international obligations. Does that mean tariff cuts?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. You had better talk to the State Department

about that. As you know, we have had this old agreement that has been running for quite a long while, several years. You had better take it up with the State Department.

Q Mr. President, what response have you had to your Warm Springs statement on the public debt and taxes?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I do not think there is anything at this time.

Q Sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think there is anything at this time. In other words, anybody who says anything about the tax situation is just making wild guesses because I do not know. There has been no change in policy at any time. We are still in the study stage and will be until about the twenty-sixth of December, which will be the last Tuesday in the month.

Q Is that the day after Christmas this year? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. We set Christmas for the last Monday in December this year.

Q Have you had much response to your request that the people tell you which they prefer?

THE PRESIDENT: Not very much from the people. (Laughter)

Q Your wife spoke out. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: We have had a lot of other gratuitous advice but it is very nice. I like to get it.

Q There are some Federal judgeships, at least one which we are interested in. Are you up to the point of discussing those?

THE PRESIDENT: Frank (Attorney General Murphy) and I have not had much chance to discuss any appointments yet and probably won't for about another week.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, sir.

Q Mr. President, Governor Landon was in town yesterday and he again expressed the desire that you make some sort of expression in connection with your 1940 plans. Have you anything on that?

THE PRESIDENT: You had better ask May Craig. (To Miss Craig, as the Press were leaving) May, that wasn't up to your standard at all.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #605,
Executive Offices of the White House,
December 12, 1939, 4.10 P.M.

Q I got a message from Senator White of Maine, personally for you, today.

THE PRESIDENT: What is it?

Q He says Maine is republican.

THE PRESIDENT: Did he really?

Q Yes. He asked me to tell you.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, some day he is going to be wrong. (Laughter) You tell him that some day he is going to be wrong.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I have got anything today.

Q There is a rumor that Frank Knox will be asked to go into the Cabinet as Secretary of the Navy. The rumor is strong again today.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we generally have something like that at this time.

Q Do you think that is a Tuesday story?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes; that is a Tuesday story.

Q Can we expect a new District Judge (for the District of Columbia)?

THE PRESIDENT: Here in the District of Columbia?

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: We have not taken that up. The Attorney General and I have talked over several judgeships but not the District of Columbia yet.

Q There are reports that you have decided on a Supreme Court Judge?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet.

Q You have conferred several times recently with Norman Davis. Has he given you any estimate of relief requirements in Europe or what the Red Cross is doing about it?

THE PRESIDENT: I have a memorandum somewhere around here, if you want figures. They have spent over $500,000. to date, or it is in the process of being spent, and the Central Committee of the Red Cross has appropriated a million dollars for war relief in Europe.

Q Does that include Finland?

THE PRESIDENT: It includes Finland. The chapters (of the Red Cross) have produced warm garments for refugees, valued at $250,000. and the public has contributed for war relief $260,000. and they have sent, already, warm clothing and medicines to Polish refugees who are in neighboring countries, Rumania, Hungary, Lithuania and Latvia, and they are spending $250,000. besides, under an agreement with the German Red Cross, to give impartial aid within Poland.

They have sent $25,000. for initial relief in Finland and have bought $16,000. worth of medicines in London to send by airplane to Finland. Wayne Taylor is arriving in Finland today to report on further relief needs.

Then, in addition to those statistics, I think I can say that of course we are encouraging all kinds of gifts and, through various channels, of working in cooperation with the Red Cross because, undoubtedly, the needs in the case of Finland will be a good deal greater than they are now, and the needs in Poland will continue at least through the winter, also the needs of Polish refugees who got out of the country.

Q Mr. President, as the president of the Red Cross, have you anything to say about the competition Mr. Hoover seems desirous of offering in connection with relief in Finland?

THE PRESIDENT: Fine, fine, because, as I understand it, there is cooperation between his money raising and the Red Cross.

Q Did he consult with the Red Cross, do you know?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I think they have been in consultation for about two months.

Q Are there any moves still being made to establish a central agency to take care of all the refugees?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it is being handled through a central agency now.

Q I beg pardon?

THE PRESIDENT: It is being handled through a central agency now, all of it.

Q Well, I counted six of these different Polish committees.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and they are all working through the Red Cross.

Q Through the Red Cross?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, the Export-Import Bank says there is no statutory obstacle to them lending money which Finland may use for military purposes but they have a policy against loans of that kind. Have you anything to say about the relaxation?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think it is relaxation. I think this loan to Finland is for non-war material.

Q Yes, it is, but I was wondering whether there might be a relaxation on future loans?

THE PRESIDENT: That is an "iffy" thing. They are not in contemplation at this time.

Q We hear that George Earle is to get a diplomatic post. Can you tell us anything about that?

THE PRESIDENT: I read it in the paper too. (Laughter)

Q Do you plan to ask Congress for any changes in the Neutrality Act at the next session?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of, no. But, if something new should turn up in January --

Q (interposing) No weaknesses have developed?

THE PRESIDENT: But if something turns up and I should have to ask for something, do not say it is contrary to what I said on the twelfth of December. I have not any thought in mind now.

Q Is it desirable to ask for trade agreement renewals next session?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Can you tell us anything about the desirability of lowering the excise tax on copper as indicated in the Chilean trade agreement?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know what is contemplated in the Chilean trade agreement so I cannot answer the question.

Q The present excise tax is four cents and, in the agreement under discussion, there is the possibility of a fifty per cent reduction or two cents.

THE PRESIDENT: I am glad to have the information. I did not know it before. (Laughter)

Q Is there any modification of the Act in the process of review?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. The thing has not been taken up except with the general thought that there will undoubtedly be requests

for renewals. There are undoubtedly many countries that are still in the potential effort of making trade agreements for the general objective of increasing our exports along the same line. We have had great success in doing it so far.

Q Did Secretary Wallace say anything to you about that Dies report on the consumers' organization?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Lots of other people have, though. (Laughter)

Q Name three, Mr. President. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, can you tell us anything of your conference with Mr. Leon Henderson yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: No, just the usual checkup. It happens about every three or four weeks -- S. E. C. and the T. N. E. C.

Q Senator Taft said yesterday in Boston that Government expenses could be reduced to such an extent, without hurting anything, that the Budget would be balanced in two years.

THE PRESIDENT: Good, good. I would do anything in the world to give him a prize for a bill of particulars. I would offer a very handsome prize if he, personally, would give me a bill of particulars.

Q In your conference with Mr. Eccles, did you come to any conclusion about taxes at all?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Has the question of his reappointment come up, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: No, we did not talk taxes or appointments at all.

Q Mr. President, in regard to these trawlers and other boats that the British bought for mine sweepers, if we could sell fully armed vessels, why can't we sell unarmed vessels?

THE PRESIDENT: All I know is that it has been taken under advisement

by the Attorney General. I do not know anything about it one way or the other. You had better ask him.

Q Referring to the Dies report for a moment, is there anything you can tell us about it?

THE PRESIDENT: Which report was it, the Matthews report?

Q Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: As I understand it, and I will tell you that my only information is what I have read in the papers, Jerry Voorhis said that the chairman of the committee appointed himself a subcommittee; he thereupon assumed the role of subcommittee; he thereupon received a report from Mr. Matthews and his subcommittee directed that it be accepted by the committee and published. Am I right?

Q That is right.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think that speaks for itself.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Secretary Wallace is putting out a statement on consumers.

Q Something seems to have happened in the W. P. A. situation in Minneapolis which raises some questions among people interested in the W. P. A. organization. The first question asked is, "Do W. P. A. workers have a right to organize?" And, second, "If they do, can that right be protected?"

Have you any comment you care to make?

THE PRESIDENT: I would say offhand and, mind you, this is a horseback opinion, that they have just as much right to organize as the employees of the Government in Washington and, as you know, the

employees of the Government in Washington belong to, I think it is either two or three different organizations. Most of the employees here in the city belong to one of the two or three.

They have not got the right to strike against the Government; they have not got the right to create commotions and disturb the peace.

Well, that is about all there is to be said on that. I think it is just common sense.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

MR. YOUNG. Thank you, sir.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #606,
Held while the President was in his automobile,
parked alongside of the Presidential Special Train,
Highland[illegible], New York,
December 15, 1939, 8.45 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, boys.

Q It is kind of cold.

THE PRESIDENT: That is terrible.

Q How cold is it? What is your guess?

THE PRESIDENT: I would say around twenty-five or six. That is not bad, you know.

I do not think I know a thing. It is awful to be in that frame of mind in the morning but we are going to have a good day.

Q Anything on the South American running gun battle?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I have not heard anything more than you got.

Q That Mr. Wilson reported last night, at the State Department -- yesterday afternoon?

THE PRESIDENT: Wasn't that the same thing that came out in the papers?

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: No, I have not got another thing.

Q Are you going to see Ambassador Kennedy?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q What made me ask you was a story in Boston that he was going to see you Friday.

THE PRESIDENT: I think his plans are indefinite. He is going to see me on the way south, but after that I do not know.

Q Can you tell us anything generally about that South American running gun battle?

THE PRESIDENT: I think not; no.

Q Mr. Patterson (of the New York Daily News) was interested, very much, on the showing of guns. You know, the Germans had eleven-inch as against the British six and eight. You would not want to talk on that?

THE PRESIDENT: No. In other words, of course the truth of the matter is that Joe (Patterson) doesn't know a damned thing about it and I am only guessing. (Laughter)

Joe is all right on his Army stuff -- this is off the record, of course -- and his two ships for one every Monday morning.

Q He never misses.

THE PRESIDENT: He never misses; it is all right.

Q Do you know, sir, that old saying that there is no harm in trying, so if I may thus preface my question, I will state it. It has not been asked and it is rather important. Question: Do you, as a Liberal, agree with what Secretary Ickes said about Administrator McNutt, that he would not be a suitable candidate to liberals?

THE PRESIDENT: Of course, there is nothing I can say on that. In other words, one of the old games is to get people to comment on this man, that man, the third man, the fourth man, and gradually, by the elimination process, to have the whole story and I am much too old to fall for it. I used to, twenty-five or thirty years ago.

Q I must say I had no follow-up question. If I had had an answer to that, I would have been --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Yes. There would not have been another for a week.

Well, I am not going to do anything today except play around the place and look at the progress of the new building. McShain wrote me that he thought he would have the last part of the roof on by this morning. You cannot tell what the snow has done but he has been lucky.

Q Do you think we will stay over Monday?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. It depends entirely on what I hear down there. Of course I would like to, very much, because Anna (Mrs. John Boettiger) and John get in Sunday afternoon and I would like to have one day with them. However, the train has been told to be ready Sunday.

Q May we say, Mr. President, that you are in touch with the Department ot State as on regular other trips?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Just for example, I will probably talk with the Secretary every morning and sometimes in the evening. That is just regular procedure.

Q Thank you very much, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #607,
Executive Offices of the White House,
December 19, 1939, 4.10 P.M.

Q Mr. President, how are you?

THE PRESIDENT: Fine, perfectly grand. What is this dirty sheet (The Evening Star) I am reading here?

Q It is the metropolitan paper of Washington, sir.

Q The news is three weeks old in that.

THE PRESIDENT: Some of the filler they use is terrible. They used a piece the other day that was at least three years old. They used a filler piece three years old.

Q I have the Christian spirit. I only said three weeks.

Q By the way, we have a piece about Heywood Broun.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I said something nice about him. There is a special little clause, "He wore no man's collar."

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the front row has no news at all and apparently no questions.

Q Have you heard, sir, that a German or British cruiser has pursued a German tanker into our territorial waters?

THE PRESIDENT: I only had a flash on it. I do not know whether it is true or not.

Q Does your flash announcement identify the British ship or the tanker?

THE PRESIDENT: No, it was somewhere down south.

Q It was off Fort Lauderdale.

THE PRESIDENT: We have been there.

Q It was the German tanker ARAUCA. I think the latest thing was that

a British destroyer chased the German tanker. It was the British destroyer ORION and it went into Port Everglades and the British cruiser stayed outside the three-mile limit to await any developments that happen to the German ship.

THE PRESIDENT: That is very nice. (Laughter)

Q Would that be in our territorial waters?

THE PRESIDENT: What, Port Everglades?

Q No, three miles out.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't know. Nobody sunk?

Q Yes. (Laughter)

Q The German ship has asked for a pilot to take them in to Fort Lauderdale. That is the report that the British had.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that is something. We will get pilot dues.

Q Will there be some proclamation in connection with the new Cuban trade agreement?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. I guess the State Department will handle anything on it. I signed a lot of things today on it. I signed eight documents. For details see the Secretary of State.

Q Any of them include restoring the quotas on sugar?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes; oh, my, yes.

Q Do you know if the State Department is studying certain proposals put forth by the Tokyo foreign office? Can you tell us whether you are hopeful that a basis for friendly relations with Japan will be forthcoming?

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot, since that is one of the things the Secretary of State and I decided to defer the discussion on because we do not know anything about it.

Q Any news in the long Cabinet meeting?

THE PRESIDENT: Heavens! It was not long at all. We got out at four o'clock. It was shorter than usual. We swapped stories.

Q Can you tell us anything more about the restoration of sugar quotas?

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot. Frankly, I do not know. You had better ask the State Department.

Q Can you tell us anything about the call John Lewis made today? He said he would leave it to you if anything can be said. Could you say anything?

THE PRESIDENT: I talked about my hopefulness that labor as a whole will come together. There was nothing concrete.

Q Some of us did not hear the answer to the next to the last question about sugar quotas.

THE PRESIDENT: I said he had better ask the State Department because I do not know.

Q When the Department of State put out the announcement, they said, "You had better ask the Department of Agriculture" and today the Department of Agriculture says to ask the President.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, take me out of this run-around. You would save mileage by confining it to State and Agriculture. Honestly, I do not know at all.

Q Anything about the District Judgeship?

THE PRESIDENT: We have not got to that. We got to -- did we do the Virginia judges?

GENERAL WATSON: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: The Virginia judges was as far as we got.

Q How about the successor to Dr. Gruening?

THE PRESIDENT: That we have not even discussed.

Q Have your studies on the Budget gone far enough to tell us anything about it?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet. Probably there won't be anything decided until somewhere around the end of this week, when we will probably come to a final decision, subject to correction up to the date, whatever it is, that it is going to the Public Printer, which has to be next Friday. And then you won't know. We will have our seminar, as usual, I suppose on the third or fourth (of January).

Q We hear reports that there have been very drastic cuts in many items.

THE PRESIDENT: I would put it this way, that a lot of department and agency heads think they are very drastic. But some other people do not think they are very drastic.

Q In that connection, do you think Senator Taft has qualified yet for that prize?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not heard a peep.

Q Mr. President, Earl Browder said in a speech in New York last night that the New Deal was trying to start a holy war against Russia. Any comment on that? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: What do they call it down in Arabia? What is a holy war?

Q Jehad.

THE PRESIDENT: Jehad; that is right.

Q Did Mr. Lewis offer any encouragement for your hopefulness on labor?

THE PRESIDENT: I think he is hopeful too. (Laughter)

Q Has there been discussion on the so-called certificate plan of financing farm relief?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that is going on all the time. Of course on that -- on the general subject, not the certificate plan -- it brings back to the memory of all of us that in 1938, when the Congress appropriated, what was it? $250,000,000., it was pretty late in the session and they all thought it was too late to bring in some kind of a tax measure to repay the Treasury for this $250,000,000. As I remember it, they passed that Joint Resolution which, in effect, promised that at the next session they would pass a tax measure to bring in $250,000,000.

Well, of course the record shows that they did not. Then, last year, they appropriated three hundred million more for the same general objective and they did not pass a tax to make it up. So I figure that the Congress owes the Treasury $550,000,000. and I guess -- probably it is a pretty good guess -- that I will mention the fact that the Congress owes the Treasury $550,000,000. under a solemn pledge given a little over a year ago.

Q You will mention that?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it will be mentioned.

Q And put it in the same category as the war debts?

THE PRESIDENT: Somewhat; same general idea.

Q Write them a note twice a year? (Laughter)

Q Will you comment on these violations of the neutrality belt around the Americas?

THE PRESIDENT: No; not yet.

Q Mr. President, there are some reports of the resignation of the

Governor of the Farm Credit Administration. Have you received any such resignation?

THE PRESIDENT: We are not ready on that yet.

Q Mr. President, has any progress been made on the bonded indebtedness of the South American republics you spoke of some months ago?

THE PRESIDENT: I think they are making pretty good progress. I have only had one or two informal reports on it. No details yet. They are making very definite headway.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #608,
Executive Offices of the White House,
December 22, 1939, 11.00 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Did he (indicating Mr. Godwin) talk about it this morning?

MR. EARLY: Yesterday morning.

Q (Mr. Godwin) What is that about?

THE PRESIDENT: Everybody going broke the end of the month.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Well, I will tell you, I am.

THE PRESIDENT: It is not as bad as some previous Christmases and New Years. Earl (Mr. Godwin) is worrying about his income tax this year.

Q (Mr. Young) Yes, his salary was printed the other day in Variety.

THE PRESIDENT: He will turn conservative, the first thing I know.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I did take up the question as to whether we could pay the good people who serve the Government ahead of the regular pay day, at the end of the month, but the Director of the Budget and, I think, the Comptroller General say that, unfortunately, we cannot do it under the law.

I have done my best and we will all have to stay broke for a few days until the second of January, except some people who have new radio contracts and things like that.

Q Mr. President, are you reviving the Interdepartmental Health [?] Committee?

THE PRESIDENT: No; I do not know where that crazy story came from.

Q No reflections?

THE PRESIDENT: No. It was just made out of whole cloth.

Q Is Miss Roche (Miss Josephine Roche) going to stay?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Did she resign?

THE PRESIDENT: She wanted to resign last spring and I persuaded her to stay on into the fall and in the fall she wanted to resign again and I persuaded her to stay on.

They are working along the line of continuing their studies and they are also working along another line which I suggested to them, which might be called an effort during the coming year (to work out a plan on a small basis) instead of waiting for a complete and perfected plan, such as a plan similar to the Wagner Bill and the Harrison Bill, which would cost an awful lot of money -- might run up to a very, very large sum every year.

The chief trouble with those plans for health, as you all know, is that they are more or less based on what we call the "matching basis" and the trouble with the matching basis is that those states which have the most money are able to put up the most money and get the greatest amount of federal aid and those, of course, are the states that have the best health conditions. The poorest health conditions are in those states which have the least money to put up and therefore would get the least federal aid.

This general proposal that we are studying at the present time is that -- on the assumption that we are not going ahead on the 45-55 matching basis on public works, as hitherto, for schoolhouses and county courthouses and jails and water works

and sewer systems, et cetera and so on -- that we could afford, in a comparatively small way, to have the Federal Government finance hospitals and clinics -- I suppose the best term is "medical centers" -- in those parts of the United States that have not got any hospitals or facilities.

You take, for instance, two cases: I have in mind a county in the State of New York with about 100,000 population that has six pretty good hospitals in it and enough money to keep those hospitals going. That is a pretty good health service, taking it by and large. Then I have in mind another area in the lower South where three counties with a total of about the same population, 100,000 people, have not a hospital within the three counties, no clinic, no operating room and eighty miles from the nearest hospital. They can only send patients if there are free vacant beds in that hospital eighty miles away.

Now, the general thought is that in a locality like the latter -- and there are probably several hundred of them in the United States -- the Federal Government should build small hospitals for the region that has no hospital facilities on condition that the Federal Government is satisfied that the local people will be able to operate and manage that hospital in a successful way, both from the point of health efficiency and from the point of view of finance, so that if they once get the plant the local communities would sustain it along adequate lines, both financially and from the point of view of good medical service. And the cost of that, what might be called the first experimental step to bring better medical health center

facilities to the places that have not got any at all -- and I think it is worth trying -- the cost would not be very great. The idea would be to start it in such a way as to serve the most needy communities first and, if the thing works, it can be developed further.

Q Mr. President, would that be a substitute for the Wagner Bill?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I would not call it that. It would mean at this particular coming session we would not attempt to put through a general plan on a nationwide basis but that this would be a step toward the improvement of health in those communities that have complete lack of facilities today.

Q Would that take new legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, my, yes.

Q Where would the funds come from and which agency would do it?

THE PRESIDENT: It would be a combination. The Government would put it up. It would be a combination of P. W. A. and W. P. A. using, at the same time, W. P. A. labor as far as we can.

Q Does the U. S. Public Health Service come in?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. They come in on the plans and they would pass, with probably some very distinguished group of doctors, on the plans and also on the approval of the local operating methods.

Q They would make the plans and the surveys?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and also the inspection to see that it was kept up to the promises.

Q Has the Federal Security Administrator worked with this committee in formulating this plan?

THE PRESIDENT: It is being studied. It is in the preliminary study stage

and I have talked to quite a number of doctors. I am talking very soon with the American Medical Society people; they have a committee of seven that is studying this same type of project.

Q Mr. President, do you mean the Federal Government would bear all the construction expense?

THE PRESIDENT: All the construction expense on the condition that the maintenance and operation and management was carried out completely by the local people.

Let me give you an illustration which will probably show you what I mean: Take any one of three or four given areas that I know of, one of them in the Middle West, one in the rather far West, not as far as the Coast, and a couple of them down south. Doctors in those places have come to me and have said, "The one thing we cannot do is to build a hospital. We cannot get the money; it is a poor section. We cannot build a hospital. We cannot put in the operating rooms. We cannot buy an ambulance to go with it. We cannot put in facilities for trained nurses. We cannot raise the capital. But, if we could get a small plant, we think we could maintain it."

I said, "What do you mean by a small plant?" Now, this is just one example. They said, "In our locality we could put up a one-story building of wood. It is a good section for wood. The building would last fifty or seventy-five years if it was kept painted. Being one-story, it is perfectly safe from the point of view of fire. It would have two wings, one for white people and one for colored people. It would have, in the middle, an administration building with a clinic in it that people could come to, and an operating room, and also a laboratory

which, of course, is necessary for any modern hospital."

I said, "What could you do it for?" "Well," they said, "we could do the whole works, including equipping the operating room, for $150,000."

In other words, this is not any grandiose scheme for putting up hospital centers that cost $10,000,000. apiece. In these areas, in a great many cases we could put up a fairly adequate building for $150,000.

Q How many beds?

THE PRESIDENT: About a hundred beds.

Q A hundred beds total in both wings?

THE PRESIDENT: Total, yes.

Q As I remember it, the A. M. A. (American Medical Association) Committee particularly criticized the proposal to build hospitals, saying that we have enough hospitals and saying that we had better use those hospitals we have.

THE PRESIDENT: I think they were talking about some of the great centers when they said that. In other words, they would not say it themselves in these localities that have no hospitals. I think the statement that they made was probably true in relation to some of the great cities of the country.

Q One sound point that the A. M. A. has made consistently is that they would like to have the operation of the hospitals left in private hands rather than in Governmental hands. Your plan would comply with that?

THE PRESIDENT: In other words, it would be the people in the locality.

Q In introducing this subject, you spoke of the old P. W. A. ratio of

55-45 as a precedent. I imagine --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No, no; that is gone. For this thing it would be 100% by the Federal Government but, of course, a fairly large proportion of that 100% would be covered by the W. P. A. relief workers' appropriation.

Q Have you reached any estimate as to how much might be used in the first year under such a program?

THE PRESIDENT: No, we have not got as far as that. It would not be a very large sum.

Q This looks like a natural for the log rollers on the Hill. How would you hold that down?

THE PRESIDENT: (laughing) I think you are right and, therefore, the idea is this: Of course, if Congress wants to do it they have a perfect right to do it but the objective is to find out the fifty areas in the United States that most need hospital facilities. Now, if Congress wants to specify those fifty areas -- it would take a long time to study it out -- of course, it is all right. However, the practical way is to appoint a committee of distinguished doctors, rather than Congressmen, to determine which are the most necessary fifty localities to put fifty buildings in.

Q What in case these local people cannot support it?

THE PRESIDENT: That is what we want to find out.

Q Suppose it couldn't?

THE PRESIDENT: The idea is that no hospital would be built until some expert committee of doctors and hospital managers and Public Health people is satisfied that the community could and would support it.

Q No liens at all? The title, free, goes from the Federal Government?

THE PRESIDENT: It is up to the Federal Government to keep the title to it.

Q Would not that penalize the communities which do build their own? Would any community build its own?

THE PRESIDENT: I am talking about the communities that haven't got any at all, no hospital at all. This northern area that I am talking about has got six hospitals and if it wants a seventh hospital it has enough money to build it and pay for it itself.

Just the same thing on talking of matching on the question of education. The States of New York, Massachusetts and Illinois ought not to have any aid from the Federal Government for schools but Georgia and Mississippi and Alabama, South Carolina and Arkansas, I think they need some aid because they have not got the values down there to build schools and run them. You take the State of Georgia -- some of you were down with me this year. You remember the Atlanta papers? There were great headlines every morning: "State Schools will Probably Close Down the First of January." This information was given to me when we were down there. They have kept open through December because the Governor borrowed $400,000., I think, from the State highway fund. There is your problem. We rich people up here, we do not visualize it.

Q A group of newspapers in Cleveland, with the cooperation of the Police Department, has organized what they call an "Industrial Safety Council" for the prevention of sabotage. They say this

is being done with the encouragement of the Federal Government through Naval Intelligence. It has aroused a great deal of opposition from labor, which thinks this is a move for labor espionage. Will you say what the policy is?

THE PRESIDENT: I never heard of the particular thing. Of course the policy is a very simple one. What is labor going to do if, in a plant employing 10,000 people there are ten potential -- what do they call them? -- saboteurs? Now, there is no attack on those 10,000 people employed there but it is very distinctly the duty of the Federal Government to ferret out these potential saboteurs. That is just plain common sense.

Q It is necessary to have the industries themselves work with the cooperation of the local authorities?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, sure; and labor. Heavens, the other 9,990 people have a duty as employees to help the Government find the ten.

Q Mr. President, will you discuss this Ohio soup kitchen proposal?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think there is anything to discuss. If and when any city finds itself with a lot of people who are starving and it is proved to the Federal Government, the Federal Government will try to do what it has said right along it would do and that is to keep people from starving. The obvious way of doing that is to do it the way we operate during a flood disaster or an earthquake or something like that. We use the Red Cross, we use the W. P. A., we use the nonmilitary part of the Army, which means camp kitchens that are drawn upon in any disaster.

Q The Federal Government would not move in that area voluntarily? You would have to be informed by the Governor of the state? Is that clear to you?

THE PRESIDENT: No. If there are a lot of starving people and it is proved, there is no question of the Governor or anybody else. We will just carry out the policy of the Federal Government.

Q Have you seen any such proof from Ohio as this?

THE PRESIDENT: No. That is merely a restatement of what we have been saying for the last seven years.

Q Is there anything new to tell about what you are going to do about sugar quota restorations, about which there has been some confusion?

THE PRESIDENT: I think I signed an Executive Order last night and I think you had better get it because I won't trust my memory. I am getting mixed up again between quotas and tariffs.

Q There have been reports that the Under Secretary of the Treasury, John Hanes, is going to resign immediately. Can you tell us anything about that?

THE PRESIDENT: I think he is going out very soon. I think last spring Johnny wanted to go back to private business and we asked him and persuaded him to stay through the summer. Then he was going out in the autumn but the war broke and we persuaded him to stay on until we got out our autumn financing. Now that is all done. I cannot, with a clear conscience, ask him to stay any longer because there is no particular crisis over in the Treasury. I am very sorry to have him go and I am very glad we were able to keep him on for six months or more after the

time he wanted to leave.

Q Do you know about the District Judge for the District of Columbia, which is reported to be almost ready?

THE PRESIDENT: It has not got here yet. Maybe Frank (the Attorney General) is studying it.

Q Will Colonel Harrington have to go back with the Army after the first (of the year)? His four-year tour is up on January sixth.

THE PRESIDENT: That is bad news. I do not know.

(Note: It developed that Colonel Harrington's leave from the Army had been granted by Congressional action, consequently there was no limitation on its length.)

Q Several weeks ago a reporter asked you if Mr. Garner's candidacy made any difference in your plans. In view of the statement made yesterday by Secretary Ickes and the Attorney General regarding Progressive-Liberal coalitions, is there anything you can say today?

THE PRESIDENT: The easiest way to put it is -- please excuse the language and do not quote it -- I am too damned busy (laughter), literally, to be talking about potential events a long, long way off. I have other things I think are more important for the Nation at the present time, foreign affairs and certain domestic issues which are right to the core.

In other words, I, unfortunately (?), have, as some of you have been kind enough to intimate, two things, a sense of proportion and a sense of timing. (Laughter)

Q You sat up all night on that one.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. (Laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

Q Merry Christmas!

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes; I forgot. A Merry Christmas to you all!

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #609,
Executive Offices of the White House,
December 26, 1939, 4.05 P.M.

(Mr. John Boettiger, the President's son-in-law, attended this Press Conference. He held in his arms John Roosevelt Boettiger, the President's grandson.)

Q (Mr. Godwin) What is this, the infant class?

You should have seen Bill Hassett eating two Thanksgiving (Christmas) dinners at my house and then going out to Mary Holmes's and Russ Young's and eating two more.

THE PRESIDENT: Gosh, what happened?

Q (Mr. Godwin) I don't know; he is here today.

THE PRESIDENT: He just had an operation, too.

Q (Mr. Godwin) He is going to have another one, Mr. President.

That comes from cutting out liquor. He don't drink any.

You will need an extra Christmas for that fellow.

THE PRESIDENT: Is he all right today? I haven't seen him.

MR. EARLY: He said he would like to leave early this afternoon.

THE PRESIDENT: Tell him to answer all calls.

MR. EARLY: I think he is studying Chinese, Mr. President.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: President Godwin has asked me to present the latest applicant for membership in the White House Correspondents' Association to you, Mr. John Roosevelt Boettiger. I will ask his father first what paper he represents.

MR. JOHN BOETTIGER: I think it is the P.I. (Laughter)

Q (Mr. Godwin) How do you spell it? (Laughter)

Q (Mr. Young) He is destroying the Star over there.

MR. JOHN BOETTIGER: That was done long before.

THE PRESIDENT: We have been giving him a course the last two days as to the difference between "background" and "off the record." I think he will soon be eligible.

Q If he is to be eligible and if he is to attend these Conferences legitimately, we would be very glad to ask for his admission and issue a card.

THE PRESIDENT: Then you need more than a card?

Q (Mr. Young) For a dollar.

Q (Mr. Godwin) For a dollar, one dollar.

MR. JOHN BOETTIGER: He has told me he has not got the dollar but he greatly appreciates the invitation and will try to borrow the dollar.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Well, I will get it.

MR. JOHN BOETTIGER: If Grandpop has a dollar.

Q (Miss Craig) Looking at the Times-Herald picture, he looks as though he was trying to get off the record.

THE PRESIDENT: That was a good crawl; it is all right.

Q Any news?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think there is a thing. Steve (Mr. Early) has been feeding you all morning.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, sir.

Q What came out of your conference with Secretary Hull, Secretary Wallace and Assistant Secretary Grady?

THE PRESIDENT: That was just to bring me up to date on these various things.

Q The Argentine Trade Agreement?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that among others.

Q Any progress being made on that?

THE PRESIDENT: I hope so.

Q Can you fill us in on your conference with George Allen?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, we just talked in general about this -- is it the old plan or the new plan or the old plan revamped?

Q New plan.

Q Did you --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Just went over it in general.

Q Is the Budget Message finished yet?

THE PRESIDENT: Finished? Oh, my, no.

Q Were you finished with the local matter?

THE PRESIDENT: Only I suppose the next step is that it is to be presented with all the particulars and accounts of the various parts of it to the Committee.

Q Won't it be prepared in bill form?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. Is that a plan or a bill?

Q Was District suffrage discussed?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. President.

Q Mr. President, will the appointment of Mr. Taylor to the Vatican affect his status as Chairman of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees?

THE PRESIDENT: No, he will continue on that.

Q Governor James (Governor Arthur H. James of Pennsylvania) last week accused W.P.A. of discriminating against Pennsylvania because it

turned Republican. Have you any comment on that?

THE PRESIDENT: No; naturally, not.

Q Will Mr. Davies have special functions as new Assistant Secretary of State?

THE PRESIDENT: I think he will take over most of the functions that Breck Long is now doing.

Q What happens to Long?

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot tell you yet.

Q Will you tell us something about Mr. Taylor's activities at the Vatican?

THE PRESIDENT: Activities at the Vatican?

Q Yes, sir. I mean, is there anything besides observing that he will have to do at first?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. He will get up in the morning, eat his breakfast and go through the normal functions of a human being in a post of that kind. (Laughter)

Q Will he carry a special message from you when he first goes over?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know; I have not the faintest idea.

Q In that connection, Mr. President, dispatches out of Italy today say the Italian Government and the Vatican have reached an agreement to work along parallel lines for peace. I wonder if there are any comments?

THE PRESIDENT: No. The more nations and governments do things like that, the better it is .

Q Would you venture a guess, sir, whether the eight United States liners will be transferred to the Norwegian flag?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. I have only heard a rumor. I have not

heard of anything done. Has the transfer gone through yet?

Q They are pending. The negotiations are pending.

THE PRESIDENT: I read about it in the newspapers; I have not heard anything about it.

Q Can you tell us anything of the suggestion to use some of those liners for meteorological observation in the North Atlantic?

THE PRESIDENT: That report has not come to me yet. I believe it is being studied because they believe there ought to be something in the way of an observation post or station between Bermuda and the Azores. It has not come to me yet.

Q Mr. President, could you tell us about your conference with Assistant Secretary Johnson this morning?

THE PRESIDENT: No. It was just on coordination of purchases; joint purchases.

Q Was the Panama situation discussed, the building of the barracks down there?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think -- haven't we asked for bids on that by a certain date?

Q Yes.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Otherwise, all quiet and I have not -- Russ (Mr. Young), I have not actually started writing the Annual Message. You are a little ahead of time.

Q (Mr. Young) Steve (Mr. Early) is ahead of time.

THE PRESIDENT: I will probably start either on Budget or on that this evening. I do not know which. They will proceed simultaneously.

Q (Mr. Young) Steve (Mr. Early) will hear about that after the first

of the year.

Q Do you plan to deliver your Message in person?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know yet. Probably yes, on the doctrine of chances.

Q (Mr. Godwin) We will send him (indicating John Roosevelt Boettiger) a card.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #610,
Executive Offices of the White House,
December 29, 1939, 10.50 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: That sight on the sofa is enough to make anybody feel good this morning. (Referring to the secretaries seated on the sofa, laughing at some quip)

Q (Mr. Godwin) What do you hear from Franklin?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, he is all right.

Q Was it bad?

THE PRESIDENT: Some cuts. Nothing busted.

(The President motioned to Miss Craig, indicating her new fur piece.)

Q (Miss Craig) The American fox fur farmers' loss is my gain.

THE PRESIDENT: A Christmas present?

Q (Miss Craig) Yes.

Q (Mr. Mahoney) My boss (Mr. Casey Hogate) complimented your menu yesterday.

THE PRESIDENT: It is all right.

Q (Mr. Mahoney) It is all right. It would make me fatter.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I am going to -- when Congress assembles I am going to send up the name of the new Under Secretary of the Treasury, whom you know all about very well is Danny Bell.

Q Who?

Q Dan Bell.

Q That is nice. He always gave us the impression that he did not want to lose his civil service status.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't believe he has to. In other words, he has a certain number of years in which he can stay out and then go back.

Q Do you recall what his title is now?

MR. EARLY: Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury.

THE PRESIDENT: Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury. Steve (Mr. Early)has got his biography out here, in case you want to see it.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Before we get any further I think the Press would like to say, this being the last Press Conference of the year, that we wish you an eventful 1940. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Don't be so equivocal. (Laughter)

Q (Mr. Godwin) We have learned it here, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: It is all right. That is very sweet of you.

Q Mr. President, there is one little matter connected with these exchanges between these religious bodies of the White House. You have taken that matter up with three large religious bodies but, in the case of the Protestants, at least, being an old Protestant choir boy, I know that many church organizations are not connected with the Federal Council. What, if anything, do you intend to do in that situation?

THE PRESIDENT: Two things. In the first place, if any of the heads of these churches -- there seem to be four which are not directly in full membership in the Federal Council: the Southern Baptists with 4,800,000, the Southern Presbyterians with 500,000, the Lutherans with 4,000,000, who, however, are associated in a consultative capacity, and then -- I do not know what the membership of the Episcopalians is, you probably know better than I do -- they are also associated in a consultative capacity. Then there

are a great many very small organizations of separate Protestant churches. Well, there are two things: The first is that if any of the leaders of those churches want to come in here and talk to me in the same way as Dr. Buttrick or Dr. Adler, I will be very glad to see them too. Of course I hope also that they will have, nearly all of them, the same feeling that all churches are pretty well united in the objective that we have towards peace and that they will keep in touch with Dr. Buttrick and communicate with me in that way. If they want to see me personally, of course I will be delighted to see them.

Q Have you received those letters from the Baptists yet, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, there is a story out of Buenos Aires that the Argentine trade treaty is on the rocks. Have you any information on that?

THE PRESIDENT: Not to my knowledge; I have not heard anything about it.

Q There have been new reports that this Government is considering sending an ambassador to Germany. Is there anything new on that?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not heard of it; not a thing.

Q Some miners in Ohio telegraphed yesterday and asked that soup kitchens be sent out there?

THE PRESIDENT: I saw that in the paper. I do not know whether the telegram has actually come in.

Q Will one be sent?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose it will be turned over to Colonel Harrington for investigation.

Q I understand the Budget Director has sent a letter to the Department heads, telling them not to talk of the Budget cuts they have suffered. Any occasion for that letter?

THE PRESIDENT: I guess it is the usual annual letter that has always gone out.

Q It said, "By direction of the President" --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) The same thing goes out every year. In other words, when the Budget is made up it is solely and purely a question for the Congress.

Q Have you received from the Department of Justice a recommendation for the First Circuit Court Judge?

THE PRESIDENT: That is New England. No.

Q There are several vacancies around for Government posts besides the Under Secretary of the Treasury, particularly the Diplomatic?

THE PRESIDENT: They have not been decided on finally. There have been some tentative decisions but I do not think I will announce them until their names go up to the Senate.

Q When may we expect the nominations?

THE PRESIDENT: Very early in the session.

Q How about the nomination for the Supreme Court?

THE PRESIDENT: The same thing.

Q Does that include the Federal Judge in the District of Columbia?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know because I have not talked about it.

Q Have you arrived at a figure on the Budget?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Can you tell us what it is?

THE PRESIDENT: It is good. (Laughter)

Q When will the seminar be held?

THE PRESIDENT: Let us see. The Speaker is coming in at lunch time today and I am going to talk with him about when the Annual Message is to go in and I will let you all know this afternoon. If the Annual Message goes in on the third, I see no reason why the Budget should not go up the fourth, which is Friday.

Q Thursday.

THE PRESIDENT: And I could have the seminar on the Budget on --

MR. EARLY: (interposing) It more or less depends, Mr. President, on the Public Printer. That involves a terrific printing job. May I suggest to you, sir, that we hold the seminar about two hours after the Bureau of the Budget makes the distribution to the Press? That will give them copies for each of them and then they can come in. It is our old procedure.

THE PRESIDENT: If the Annual Message goes in on the third, if I go up to the Congress on the third, fairly early in the afternoon, we can have the seminar that same afternoon and then it won't mix up your work because you will have the Annual Message out of the way. We will take up the Budget that same afternoon, around four o'clock.

Q Mr. President, will you talk taxes to Speaker Bankhead when he comes today?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know.

Q Mr. President, concerning the deficit on farm relief, is it possible to say when the recommendations will be sent up recommending that plan to the Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I should say, like taxes, I doubt very much whether any specific form of tax is recommended but a great many forms will

be, as usual, mentioned, leaving the determination to the Congress, which is the usual method.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President, and a Happy New Year.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, Happy New Year to all of you, strenuous or otherwise.